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Mary Monholland

LIFE OF  
MARY MONHOLLAND

ONE OF THE PIONEER SISTERS OF THE ORDER  
OF MERCY IN THE WEST.

BY

A MEMBER OF THE ORDER.

(WITH PERMISSION)

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"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

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CHICAGO:  
J. S. HYLAND & COMPANY,  
323-325 Dearborn Street,  
1894.

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MOTHER SUPERIOR, ST. XAVIER'S CONVENT OF MERCY,  
Iowa City, Iowa.

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## PREFACE.

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To a casual observer it might seem that there are few saints to be found in the world now-a-days; that hearts have grown cold; that religious enthusiasm has in a measure disappeared; that bodily penances are little practiced; that the spirit of self-sacrifice is rarely met with; that forgetfulness of self, to benefit others, does not mark this materialistic age. In reality, it is not so. There are real, living, work-a-day saints, to be found in many homes—monastic and secular—of whom the world knows little or nothing. The present century has seen some.

Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan, a Dominicaness of Irish descent, and English birth, born in London, in 1803, was accounted one. During the greater part of her life, she worked as a domestic servant, giving satisfaction to her employers, adorning her soul with many virtues, difficult to practice in her state of life. She loved servitude, affording her, as it did, opportunities for practicing self-denial, mortification, submission to God and man. It was truly to her—the hidden life. She lived twenty

years in the service of a Catholic family in Belgium. The people of the city of Bruges, revered as a saint, the pious domestic who was so often seen in her own corner of the church. The most inclement weather did not prevent her attendance there.

In 1842, she returned to England, after spending thirty-nine years of her life in Belgium. Then, Bishop Ullathorn, first learned her worth, and assisted her in founding convents, orphanages, schools, and hospitals, which facts have passed into monastic history. Bishop Ullathorn wrote of her: "Rare as suns are those souls which seem to act on other souls like a sacramental power, shedding the rays of their own inward sense of God, and vital warmth of spirit, into the souls that come within the sphere of their action. Here, we come to understand the greatness of this soul, so ardent, vigorous, expansive, diffusive. Not that she diffused herself, but the enlightening, warming, invigorating grace within her, whereby she opened souls to her influence, as the sun opens blossoms into flowers; and not only did other souls open themselves, but they bowed themselves to the force of her superior spirit."

Mother Catherine Spalding, Foundress of the Sisters of Charity, of Nazareth, Kentucky, was accounted one. Although born at the close of the last century, the usefulness of her life, as a religious, extended into the present century. A log cabin served for her first convent. A second log cabin,

added to this, was used as a seminary for girls. The poverty of her community was extreme. To preserve life, she and her devoted companions, worked together in the fields, planted and husked their own corn, cut their fire-wood, fed their cattle, spun the material of which their clothing was made, dividing the intervening time between religious exercises, and study. They took little sleep. Burning with enthusiasm, Mother Catherine infused her own spirit into the hearts of others. Bardstown and Nazareth Monasteries are lasting monuments of her zeal. She founded many convents, schools, and asylums, in her native state. When this great Sister of Charity found her end approaching, she summoned the sisters to her bedside, begged pardon for any disedification she had given them, and then requested them to place her on the floor to die, in which penitential posture she yielded up her soul.

Mother Seton, Foundress of the Sisters of Charity in the United States, was accounted one. Beautiful, accomplished, gifted, in the first days of her widowhood receiving hospitality from warm-hearted, Italian friends, whose household devotion led her to contrast the cold formalism of the Episcopal Church, of which she was a member, with the vitality of Catholic faith, she instinctively turned to its altars, wondering why she had not done so before. An extract from a letter written by her at that period, explains her changed feelings:

Leghorn, Italy.

All the Catholic religion is full of those meanings that interest me. They believe Rebecca, that all we suffer, if we offer it for our sins, serves to expiate them. You remember when I asked Mr. Hobart—afterwards the Protestant Bishop of New York—what was meant by fasting in our prayer book—as I found myself on Ash-Wednesday, saying foolishly to God: I turn to you in fasting, weeping, and mourning; and I had come to church after a hearty breakfast, full of life and spirits, with little thought of my sins—you may remember he said something about its being an old custom, etc., which remark did not strengthen my faith.

“Well, dear Mrs. Filicchi, with whom I am staying, never eats, this season of Lent, until after the clock strikes three. Then the family assemble, and she says she offers her weakness and pain of fasting for her sins, united with her Saviour’s sufferings. (What do we do?) I like that very much; but what I like better, Rebecca, is, that they go to Mass here every morning. Ah! how often you and I have sighed when returning from church on Sunday evening, when the door was closed on us, saying to each other: ‘No more until next Sunday.’ Well, here they go to church at four o’clock every morning.”

Shortly after writing that letter, she entered the Catholic Church, her children following her example. The record of her religious life, thenceforth, is a history of marvels. The Sisters of Charity, known

and honored throughout the land, perpetuate her name.

Nano Nagle, an Irish aristocrat, educated in France, though belonging to the eighteenth century, living, through the Orders she founded, in the nineteenth, was accounted one. Enjoying the luxuries of life, moving, a vision of beauty, in the gay salons of Paris, receiving admiration and adulation wherever she appeared, forgetful, amid the splendor that surrounded her, of the unhappy land of her birth, groveling in the dust, with scarcely one ray of light in its horizon; her soul awoke from its selfish dream of enjoyment, on seeing the poor artizans of the great capital, hurrying to morning Mass before beginning their daily toil, while she reclined weariedly in a carriage returning from a midnight ball.

She contrasted her life with theirs, and blushed at the contrast. The throes of a new life were struggling in her heart. She turned her back on Paris and its brilliant salons, and returned to Ireland, devoting the remainder of her life to the poor of the city of Cork, for whom she opened schools in lanes and alleys, because they were prohibited in public places. This refined Irish Parisian, dressed in the simplest garb, gathered around her the children of the down-trodden people, clothing, feeding, and teaching them herself. When the work became too oppressive, she founded a convent of Ursulines to assist her. Later, she founded the Order of the Presentation Nuns to

carry on her work—educating the poor Catholic children of Ireland. Worn out with the labors of more than a quarter of a century, this noble woman was still seen gliding to the houses of the poor, the sick, and the unfortunate. Her last words to her devoted religious daughters, were: “Love one another, as you have hitherto done.”

Both the Ursulines and Presentation Nuns of Ireland, founded by Nano Nagle, are to be found in many parts of our own republic.

Catherine McAuley, the great Irish Philanthropist, was accounted one. Her life has been so recently and ably written by one of her spiritual daughters, however, that comment is unnecessary. Nothing could be added to that beautifully written work: “The Life of Catherine McAuley.”

Mother Mary Francis de Sales Monholland, was accounted one by those who knew her during her life, the details of which are presented in this volume, with the hope that it may effect some good.

St. Xavier's Convent of Our Lady of Mercy,

Iowa City, Iowa.

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## CHAPTER I.

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MARY MONHOLLAND'S EARLY LIFE. ITALIAN STATUARY. RELIGIOUS VOCATION. INJURIES CAUSED BY ILLNESS. PARTING WITH HER FATHER.

THE nineteenth century, like all the other centuries of the Christian Era, can display a long and glorious roll of heroes and heroines, who have devoted their lives to the service of God, and the relief of suffering humanity. Born of that fruitful mother—the Holy Roman Catholic Church, they inherited her sanctity, her zeal, her persevering efforts to win souls to God; erecting Churches, Schools, Hospitals, Asylums, Homes for the Friendless and the Outcast, and all the other splendid monuments of Catholic charity that exist around us.

Our young Republic is dotted over with them, like the midnight sky on a starry night, resplendent with the jewels that stud the firmament. America may well be proud of the work done by her Catholic sons and daughters. In the beginning of the century, these now established institutions existed only in the fertile brains and daring hearts of their

great originators. One of the noblest names in the galaxy is the name of Mary Monholland, the subject of this sketch.

She was born in the County Armagh, north of Ireland, about the year 1816, and was among the youthful emigrants, whose relatives were obliged to flee from the land of their birth, for loving it too well. Her parents, Patrick and Mary Monholland, the former, an ardent nationalist under government espionage, the latter, a passionate lover of the Green Isle who could not exist elsewhere, had long foreseen that they must abandon the home of their forefathers, in order to make provision for their children.

Beautiful, fertile, unhappy Ireland! that affords pasturage to the cattle-herds of the rich aliens who claim the soil; while her own sons and daughters may not receive nourishment from her teeming bosom, in this boasted era of civilization! Will the great wrong ever be righted? A weary homesickness, in advance, broke Mrs. Monholland's heart. She sickened and died, before her husband sailed from Ireland, leaving him besides little Mary, three sons—Charles, Bernard and John—all long since deceased. Their graves are still to be seen in Calvary Cemetery, New York.

It was one of Mary Monholland's life-sorrows, that she met her brother, John, long years afterwards, wandering aimlessly through the city of Chicago, and spoke to him, without recognition on

either side, when he returned from the war, in 1865, worn-out, and foot-sore, wending his way back to New York, where he left home and friends, as he told her, four short years before, to return to them now, a wreck of his former self.

He asked to stay in the hospital for a short time. It was over-crowded; she was obliged to refuse him. His words rang in her ears, his face haunted her—after he was gone—she remembered him then, or thought she did. “It is either a case of mistaken identity, which I cannot bring myself to believe: or John is dying, and has visited me in the flesh before departing,” she said to a Sister to whom she related the occurrence, “and I did not give him the help I would have given to another.”

Whether the visit was natural or supernatural, she always believed in its realism, and wept in secret for her soldier brother. Patrick Monholland did not dream that his winsome daughter, revelling in girlish glee as the sea-foam of the Atlantic enveloped her, would become a burning and a shining light in the land of his adoption, free America!—the land Columbus greeted with the chants of the “Te Deum,” and the “Salve Regina”—planting the cross in its soil when his foot first pressed it.

Mary Monholland’s celtic fire never flagged from the emigration morning on which she bade adieu to Erin, until the day of her death. She was like the sea-bird that flies on untiring wing from continent to

continent. A few years after his arrival in New York, Mr. Monholland was the prosperous owner of a wholesale grocery on Gouverneur Street, where he won for himself a high name for probity in trade.

He married a second time, but as his wife was not strong, the management of the household devolved upon Mary. The little ones, for whom she cared with almost maternal tenderness, were her special charge. She developed an unusual talent for business, also, of which her father availed himself by leaving mercantile affairs in her hands during his occasional absences. Her business methods were acquired in a peculiar institute, the private academy kept by Patrick Casserly and wife, in a down-town New York locality, where brains were cultivated, and delinquencies punished, in the manner of the old-time schools in Ireland, before Catholic Emancipation was wrung from the British Parliament.

Mr. Casserly rarely overlooked an error in accounts—ledgers and day-books were his specialty. Mary Monholland blundered once, and was punished by being made to hold out her hand for the indignity of caning. “I attended to book-keeping better after that,” she said, relating the fact to a sister in Chicago. “But I would not let him see I felt the blow.”

Hon. Eugene Casserly, later on, United States Senator for California, attended the school when Mary Monholland did, and submitted like her, to his father’s iron rule, who was, notwithstanding his

peculiar discipline, a chivalrous Irish gentleman. Art, being considered a non-essential, was not taught in Mr. Casserly's establishment, which may account for the following incident, told by Mary Monholland herself.

Noticing one day an itinerant vender of images, carrying his wares upon his head, passing the store, she called him in to buy a Saint Patrick, two angels and a Madonna, not easily recognizable as such. All were painted in rainbow hues, regardless of effect. Their cheapness was a capital point, as she thought the paint alone was worth the money. The group was placed on the parlor mantle, to surprise her father.

"Who put these things here?" he asked, peering at them over his spectacles, when he entered in the evening, (things thought Mary.)

"I did, father. Ar'ent they beautiful?"

"They are vulgar daubs, Mary. You haven't a particle of taste. Take them down. They can't be in the parlor, any way."

"Why, Father," she said in beseeching tones, "they are St. Patrick, two angels, and a Blessed Virgin. Can't you see? Please let them stay."

"Down they come who ever they are. You don't know how ridiculous they look," he replied, smiling in spite of himself, but guiltless of irreverence.

Mary folded her arms in a slightly aggrieved attitude, to contemplate her art treasures; deliberat-

ing whether to take them down, or knock them down, if that was the impression they produced. But finally, did as she was bidden, carried them to her room, and recited novena after novena before them for particular intentions.

In the discharge of duty, Mary Monholland was singularly conscientious, as was evidenced in the management of her father's second family. She learned then to successfully govern others, which was to be her lot in after life—and splendidly did she fulfill it. The slightest wish expressed by her father, was regarded by her as a command. Knowing this, and understanding her character, he used to say: "Mary, whoever obeys well, will be well obeyed. Your life is before you. Look to it."

The great financial crisis of New York, away back in the forties, occurred when Mary Monholland was mature enough to understand its disastrous consequences. Many rich merchants, with whom her father transacted business, went down in the crash. The hard-earned gains of a life-time were lost in a moment. Mr. Monholland, himself on the verge of ruin, was only saved by prudent foresight.

This set Mary to seriously considering whether a life spent solely in the pursuit of wealth, was worth living. And the answer in her heart was: "No, Mammon is a fickle master." Her resolution to become a religious, was then irrevocably taken, and no reflux of the tide of fortune could weaken it.



Nevertheless, she knew that in a religious community is to be found a wide diversity of characters—culture and refinement in some, lack of culture and refinement in others. She knew that great mutual forbearance must be practiced, that the struggle between nature and grace must be constantly carried on; that she was leading a good christian life as she was, with her own family, not with strangers; yet, after thinking it all over, she said: “I will serve God, not Mammon.”

While she remained with her father, he was contented; but she yearned for something higher than commercial knowledge. Her aspirations for religious life were bitterly opposed by her father, devout Catholic though he was. “Would you leave me alone with an invalid wife, and a family of young children to care for?” he asked one day, when Mary, with more earnestness than usual, implored his permission to enter the Order of the Sisters of Charity, founded by Elizabeth Seton, of holy memory, then a flourishing community in New York.

The appeal was made to an affectionate, but determined heart. “No, Father,” she answered, “if you think my services still indispensable, I will not leave you yet. But God will hear my prayer sooner or later. It is only a question of time. When it comes, be prepared for it. I can never be happy out of a convent.”

She raised her eyes to his, and that look convinced

him of her earnestness. However, hoping against hope, to prevail, he made no reply, and thus the matter rested during the fairest part of her youth. Proposals of marriage were made to her, by more than one prominent merchant of New York, which she summarily rejected. Nothing could turn her from her purpose.

The mental strain she endured for years, in opposition to the ardent desire of her heart, predisposed her for an attack of erysipelas. Her life was despaired of. Medical skill in those days, had not acquired the scientific precision at present claimed for it. The knife, and the leech, were more generally used than now. A New York surgeon, with one sweep of his lance, laid bare the bone of her leg—where the disease had settled—from knee to ankle, when inflammation was at the highest, causing her the most inconceivable pain.

The bone had subsequently to be removed, and when, after months of agony, a second formation of bone was perfected, that leg was perceptibly shorter than the other. Brave Mary Monholland bore the first shock of the deformity in a christian spirit, by degrees became accustomed to it, and eventually, only a close observer could discern it. Her determination to become a religious was not weakened, although she realized that this might be an impediment.

Other members of the family were old enough to

take her place, and she felt she could conscientiously give them an opportunity to do so. Her father was the stumbling block in her way. However, having recovered from her illness, and being thirty years of age, she told him she would enter a convent now, with, or without, his consent. If she waited longer, she feared she would not be accepted.

Mr. Monholland's affection for his daughter was genuine, although, perhaps, a little selfish. Not one of his sons could transact business as she did. Satisfied with her management, he had not urged them to try; so, if she left, it would be like beginning over again. He did not conceal this from her; nor that she would be a loss to him financially; but knowing her determination, saw that he must let her go.

"Very well, Mary," he said, "since you are resolved to forsake me, I will oppose you no longer. Remember, however, that I will not long survive the blow of our separation. Pray for me when you are gone. I will need your prayers." "Thanks, dear father, a thousand thanks," Mary answered. "I never loved you as well as now. I am not forsaking you. I am only getting nearer to God, where prayer will be more efficacious than any worldly service I could render you." Unshed tears choked her utterance; she said no more.

It was cold comfort for her father, who accepted it with the best grace he could. They parted soon after. It has been truly said: "He who loves father

or mother better than Me, is not worthy of Me.” Mary Monholland loved her father devotedly, but she loved Jesus Christ better, and He accounted her love—worthy.

## CHAPTER II.

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THE ORDER OF MERCY. A NEW YORK SISTER OF CHARITY.  
MARY MONHOLLAND'S CHOICE. GOING TO CHICAGO.  
STORM ON LAKE MICHIGAN. MR. OGDEN SAVES MARY  
MONHOLLAND FROM DROWNING.

DURING a Sunday afternoon visit, when Sodality meeting was over, a Sister of Charity in charge of the New York Orphan Asylum, to whom Mary Monholland was much attached, told her of the great work the Order of Mercy, founded by Venerable Catherine McAuley, in Dublin, Ireland, was doing, not only in the Green Isle, but in England, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand and other countries—work that has increased a thousand-fold since then, in every quarter of the civilized world.

“The Sisters of Mercy, from Dublin, have been established this year of grace, 1843, in Pittsburgh, by Bishop O'Connor, Mary,” she explained. “You will be surprised to hear, that Bishop Quarter, formerly Rev. William Quarter, our late pastor, is bringing a colony of them to his Episcopal City of Chicago on frozen Lake Michigan. God help the Sisters! be-

tween the Indians, and the Squatters who are rushing out there in thousands to starve on the prairies, they will have a hard time of it."

Dear Sister of Charity! gone to your reward while caring for the orphans elsewhere, your gloomy prediction was not fulfilled. The Chicago of that day, was the germ from which the Chicago of this day sprang, like a phoenix from its ashes—the city *par excellence* of the North American Continent.

Mary Monholland listened thoughtfully. If she became a Sister of Charity in New York, as she first intended, love for this dear friend would have much to do with her vocation; perhaps, would mar its integrity. Her resolve, therefore, was finally taken. She was leaving an affluent, happy home; leaving those she loved, for His sake who left His Virgin Mother to endure the shame of the cross. She would not become a Sister of Charity, lest love for this cherished daughter of Mother Seton, would lighten her cross one iota.

She would become a Sister of Mercy. She would go out to frozen Lake Michigan, among the Indians and Squatters, to endure bitter hardships, as she had been just informed, on the prairie. "Did you say the Sisters of Mercy are going to Chicago?" she quietly asked, when the inspiration to become a Sister of Mercy entered her mind.

"Yes, dear. I said so, and I am sorry for them," answered the Sister of Charity. They are wanted

nearer home." "I am going, too," said Mary Monholland, blushing, and looking up with moistened eyes.

"You, going to Chicago! I always supposed you would join our community. We have known and loved each other many years; do not let us be parted now," was the slightly reproachful reply.

"Darling Sister, just because I love you too much, I will leave you, I must become the crucified spouse of a crucified God, and the crucifixion begins here." That ended the matter. They kissed each other in silence, and parted until the Resurrection morning.

At the close of the war, two Sisters of Mercy were sent from Chicago, to Washington, D. C., by Rev. Mother Francis, formerly Mary Monholland, on business connected with the War Department; one of whom was charged to give greetings from Mother Francis to this Sister of Charity, then in charge of the Washington Orphan Asylum, who would doubtless remember her early friend.

"You come too late," the portress said when they called to explain their errand. "Our dear Superior is dying." The tolling of the death-bell, at the moment, confirmed her words. It was ever thus with Mother Francis—death, and broken heart—links: detaching her heart from earth, to centre it in heaven. She had a requiem mass said for the dead Sister. Mary Monholland wrote immediately to Bishop Quarter, asking him to procure her admission to the

Convent of Mercy in Chicago; and he, who had been her confessor for years, knowing her worth, answered simply: "Come, Mary, in God's Name. The Sisters will receive you."

Archbishop Hughes, her father's friend, gave her a letter of introduction, with which she started at once for the West, accompanied by two sodality girls, trained by the Sisters of Charity, who subsequently became edifying lay Sisters. In their position, with which they were content, they labored faithfully in the service of the Institute that accepted them. They were aunts, on the maternal side, of Rt. Rev. J. F. Shanahan, first Bishop of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, who esteemed them for their sterling worth; and loved them none the less when he learned they were lay sisters.

In 1846, when Mary Monholland left New York, railroad travel was not direct to the West, from central points East, as now; therefore, part of the journey was made by boats across the Great Lakes. As they neared the western shore of Lake Michigan, the darkening sky indicated an approaching storm. The voyagers became alarmed, knowing that disasters on the Lakes were of frequent occurrence—the five great bodies of water resemble inland seas. Fierce north winds often lash the mirrored bosom of this splendid Lake into fury, and strew its coasts with wreckage. It was on Lake Michigan, within sight of Chicago, that the beautiful steamer, "The Lady



Elgin," went down, burying three hundred passengers in its silent depths, in the glow of a summer sun-set.

In a moment the storm was upon them, roaring and terrific. Lightning flashed, thunder rolled, rain fell in torrents; while the vessel vainly ploughed its way to shore. Milwaukee was in full view, but could not be reached. A huge wave swept over the deck, carrying men, women, and children down into the seething waters—Mary Monholland among the rest. Shriek after shriek went up to heaven. Some waded to the shore. A few perished. The greater number, struggling in the water, tried to keep close to the boat to seize the ropes thrown to them,

The citizens of Milwaukee labored heroically to save the drowning people. One gentleman, W. B. Ogden, Chicago's first Mayor, and future railroad King, who witnessed the catastrophe, hearing a woman call to the rescuers: "Save my companions—leave me to my fate," cast off his coat, plunged into the Lake, and seized Mary Monholland, whose strength was fast giving out.

"I will save you, brave woman," he said, raising her on his shoulders, and carrying her safely to land, where he received her thanks and a blessing, she had scarcely the power to speak.

"Never mind thanking, I have only done my duty. The blessing may be a safer investment," he remarked lightly. Perhaps, that blessing was a step-

ping stone by which he ascended the ladder of fortune, a large part of which he devoted to charitable purposes. Among other gifts, Mr. Ogden gave Bishop Quarter a large tract of land on the north side of Chicago, to use as he pleased. The Bishop intended to build a fine Convent there for the Sisters of Mercy. His sudden demise, however, preventing his plan from being carried out, the Holy Name Church was erected on it afterward.

### CHAPTER III.

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ENTERING THE CONVENT. BISHOP QUARTER'S PALACE.  
MOTHER FRANCIS AS PHYSICIAN. GUARDING ST.  
XAVIERS. REV. FATHER BADIN. GOVERNING PUPILS.

AFTER the disaster on the Lake, Mary Monholland took a few hours to dry her saturated clothing, and the same day hired a vehicle to convey herself and her companions to Chicago; where they arrived at last, minus some of their property. Mary Monholland's heart of gold, however, was more than an equivalent for the losses, which were considerable on account of the storm. Rt. Rev. Bishop Quarter, and Rev. Mother Agatha O'Brien, received them cordially, as the convent was sorely in need of subjects; and like most new foundations of the Order of Mercy, had more work for the few Sisters who formed the colony than they were able to do. The house was small, far from comfortable, unfit for a school. Bishop Quarter found a remedy by vacating the frame tenement in which he resided, to place it at the disposal of the Sisters; reserving for himself an old "shanty" on State st., which "shanty" was for a

considerable period of time known as the Episcopal dwelling-place of the Bishop of Chicago.

Bishop Quarter, Mother Francis friend, was remarkable for his zeal, as much as for his humility. He had chosen America for the scene of his priestly labors. Dr. Doyle, his saintly Bishop in Ireland, would gladly have retained him in his diocese; but finding him inflexible in his resolution to labor on the American missions, consented to his departure. It is said, that Bishop Quarter was instrumental in introducing the Sisters of Charity into New York, after he became a priest of that great metropolitan province.

His pious parents in King's County, Ireland, had heard of their son's elevation to the American prelacy. Naturally, they were proud of him. They did not know that his episcopal palace was a "shanty," wheré he lived happily—a father to his people, and as earnestly devoted to the interests of God's Church, as he who sat upon the chair of St. Peter. Bishop Quarter, and the Sisters were greatly pleased with the New York postulant—six months later, Sister Mary Francis de Sales—who became a model of religious observance, cautiously charitable in her words, a scrupulous observer of silence, indefatigable in the discharge of her duties. This mature woman of thirty, having attained the object of her desires, was looked up to by the whole community.

Few doctors were then in Chicago; so with Rev.

Mother's permission, she constituted herself both surgeon and physician; stocking a medicine chest with such drugs as an unlicensed pharmacist might safely dispense, for the special use of the Sisters and boarders. She kept, also, a few surgical instruments—not infringing on the domain of science—for extracting teeth, which she did skillfully; removing corns; cutting proud flesh from frozen feet, which was done more than once; splinting, and otherwise keeping in place, frozen fingers and toes.

Her simple operations were generally successful, although, perhaps, not quite agreeable in their details; and hundreds of dollars were saved to the community by her knowledge of the healing art, when money was most needed. In the course of time, she discontinued both pharmacy and surgery, having other work to do. Many eminent medical gentlemen soon located in Chicago, among them, Dr. Patrick McGirr, the father of two of the Foundresses of the Chicago Community Mothers, M. Vincent, and M. Xavier McGirr. He was a true friend to the Sisters of Mercy.

Bishop Quarter was temporarily assisted by Rev. Father Badin, one of the great pioneer priests of the West, when Sister M. Francis was received as a novice. He acted as chaplain at the convent, also, and took much interest in the schools—visiting them daily. Sister M. Francis superiority as a teacher did not escape his observation. In her class-room,

silence always reigned, except during recitation of lessons. The pupils faces were bright and happy. Father Badin was surprised at their knowledge of mathematics and book-keeping, in which branches their teacher was an expert. She governed her pupils with firmness, softened by kindness. They never forgot her.

The good Father remarked to other Sisters who had not her governing talent, that they might profitably follow her methods in sustaining the standard of the schools. Few religious teachers were comparable to Sister Mary Francis in Father Badin's eyes, yet she once gave him offense in a matter of discourtesy. When Rev. Mother reproved her for it, cautioning her to curb her impulsiveness, she saw her, until then, unnoticed fault, made an humble apology to Rev. Mother, and the priest, formed a strong resolution to curb her feelings, and kept it. During her novitiate, which was shortened by dispensation, she acquired extraordinary habits of self-control.

Sister M. Francis had the knack of doing everything in time and place, therefore, accomplished more than others who were not so systematic. Father Badin noticed this when she served breakfast to him during his chaplaincy. "You, little Sister Mary," he said, "do not forget to bring me a knife, fork, spoon, or salt, as the other Sisters do, when their heads are full of algebra, and things. God bless you. Take

good care of the Sisters when you are their mother. I predict that for you, remember." His prediction was verified, and she took good care of the Sisters.

Neither did her methodical ways escape the observation of her superiors. Other Sisters, more highly cultured, swept the school-rooms in which they taught, brought in fuel, carried out ashes—forgot kindling-wood to start the fires, once in a while. Sister M. Francis, noticing this, went to the Superior, to say: "Please, Rev. Mother, may I bring kindling-wood to the school-rooms, over-night. The Sisters are not used to hard work, as I am."

"You may, Sister," answered Rev. Mother, who did not know of the disorder occasioned by the oversight. And from that day, until she passed to her eternal reward, Sister M. Francis "was a hewer of wood, and drawer of water" for her community. No labor was beneath her. She did not perform menial service in her father's house; she did it cheerfully in the house of God.

Chicago was then a frontier town, where people of all grades of society sought homes and fortunes, eastern bigots among the rest. "There shall be neither Sisters nor convents here. Chicago can get along without them," was the unanimous vote of a select assembly of Massachusetts' folks, whose ancestors had heroically burned witches and routed sisterhoods, when the opening of the convent was announced.

"There shall be both Sisters and convents here,"

was the counter-vote at a meeting of Irish, and Irish-American Catholics, when the threat reached them; and relays of men were detailed, forthwith, to guard the Convent of Mercy—next St. Mary's Church, on Wabash Avenue—by night, lest the Sisters should be molested. No one attempted to annoy the Sisters while these men were on guard. No one ever attempted to annoy them after. The Bigots were practically silenced.

But there was another, and a gentler spirit at work to remove prejudices. Mother Francis, as she was called from the third or fourth year of her profession, made such a favorable impression on the minds of non-catholics, whether in the schools, or in the transaction of business, that the folly of religious intolerance became evident to most of them. The bigotry manifested in the beginning, melted away. Their daughters attended the convent school, learned to love the Sisters, became accomplished members of society, and submitted to Mother Francis' strict discipline, even when feeling its effects.

Once, a young lady in the mathematical department taught by her, chose to rebel. She declared she could not understand certain problems as explained by Mother Francis—was not going to try—that more favored pupils were assisted in their studies, and could show better results. The more favored pupils were present, and were named offensively. The young lady was in an offended-dignity mood.



“You must apologize for your language, my child, both to me, and to the pupils whose feelings you have hurt,” Mother Francis said firmly, concealing her surprise. “Never,” was the proud reply, as the excited girl swept out of the room. “Apologize, indeed!”

Next morning, nevertheless, she was in her place as usual. Mother Francis showed no resentment, only affected not to see, and taught the class as if nothing had occurred. At noon, she came of her own accord to Mother Francis. “Dear Mother,” she said, bursting into tears, “I am sorry for my rudeness. Please forgive me, and I will cause no more trouble, either to you, or to the pupils, whose pardon I also ask.”

Mother Francis, in her impulsive way, kissed the repentant girl, who received only this reproof: “Remember, dear, that a humble apology, such as you have just now made, is a victory as well—a victory over the demon of pride, for which God will not fail to reward you,” and then and there, a friendship sprang up between teacher and pupil, that did not cool with years.

When Mrs. Colonel Mulligan, who had been a student at St. Xavier’s, and a favorite of Mother Francis, first returned from Missouri with her gallant husband, she accompanied him to St. Xavier’s to get scapulars and an Immaculate Conception medal from her old teacher, which he wore during the subse-

quent skirmishes in which he was engaged. He asked and received Mother Francis' blessing, also, before starting for Lexington, of which he was the hero, even in the defeat of the famous "Surrender." When he was brought back dead to Chicago by his faithful wife, who followed him to Winchester, Virginia, in the Shenandoah Valley, where he received his death-blow, she took his orphan children—the orphans of a brave soldier—to receive the same blessing. The requiem mass for the repose of Colonel Mulligan's soul, was one of the most impressive services ever held in St. Mary's Church; and was attended by all the civic, military and religious organizations of the city.

During the first decade of convent life, several Sisters died; some of whom were efficient and accomplished teachers, whose places could not easily be filled, as vocations for the West were few and far between at that early period. The scant accommodations the convent afforded, the piercing frosts intensified by the lake breezes, the long distances to be traversed through snow-drifts to the schools on the north and west sides of the city, told heavily on the Sisters' health. There were not members enough for the work.

Rev. Mother Agatha becoming discouraged, thought seriously of returning to Pittsburgh. Mother M. Vincent McGirr, also from Pittsburgh, decided to remain, and await better times. Being an ex-

cellent musician, her services were indispensable. It was a trying time for all, and even in convents there are those who cannot bear the brunt of trials, or difficulties. Mother Francis saw it. To relieve Rev. Mother's anxiety—to whom she was devotedly attached, and by whom she was greatly beloved—she did the work of many, never complained of labor, was a pillar of support to the disheartened Sisters. In the midst of the gloom, she spoke hopefully, amusing them with her quaint sayings. "Put your shoulder to the wheel, and the work is done," "Don't fret about the future, you will sleep half of it away," "This is a winter view of things, the summer has to come," were among them.

## CHAPTER IV.

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DEATH OF RT. REV. BISHOP QUARTER. REV. MOTHER AGATHA O'BRIEN RETURNS TO PITTSBURGH. SHE COMES BACK TO CHICAGO. THE SISTERS OF MERCY GO TO OMAHA. LAKE HOUSE HOTEL, THE FIRST MERCY HOSPITAL. THE ORPHANAGE.

ONE morning in the Spring of 1848, just four years and a month since he first sat on the Episcopal throne, Rt. Rev. William Quarter was found dead in his bed. Chicago was startled to its centre. Its first beloved Bishop was no more. He was singularly revered by both the clergy and laity; and, if possible, as much by Protestants as by Catholics. A suspicion of foul play entered the minds of some; but as the circumstances attending his death, did not warrant the suspicion, it was dismissed as groundless.

During his brief administration, he ordained about thirty priests who revered his memory to their dying day; governed the college with such ability, that it attained an eminence it could not have otherwise attained in many years; and left his diocese free of incumbrance. It was not an easy matter to take the

place of such a man, as his immediate successors experienced. Bishop Quarter was buried under the altar of the Cathedral he had consecrated, mourned for by the entire city and diocese. In 1871, when the Cathedral was destroyed by fire, his hallowed remains were removed to Calvary Cemetery.

The Sisters of Mercy felt his loss more keenly than others. He had been to them more than an earthly father. They were the spiritual children of his choice. He made no will; but his intention to provide generously for the Sisters, was known to his brother, Rev. William Quarter, who, as diocesan administrator carried it into effect. Mother Francis, shocked as she was by his death, was stimulated by it to continue what he had begun—the work of the Convent of Mercy.

To stifle grief, she scrubbed on her knees every hall and stairway in the convent, while other Sisters were draping the sanctuary of St. Mary's Church, where the dead prelate was to repose in state; yet she was his personal friend! Seldom was self so completely forgotten as by her.

Bishop Quarter's death occurred at the time when he was successfully forming a diocesan priesthood. The Bishops who succeeded him were not so fortunate, as some of the more prominent priests left Chicago after the death of Bishop Quarter. The University of St. Mary of the Lake experienced a temporary lull in its career of usefulness. The number of ecclesias-

tical students was smaller; the places left vacant by the departed pastors, remained to be filled. The Sisters of Mercy, too, lost some of their best friends, in losing these reverend gentlemen.

But, time, that cures all things, cured this. To-day, the archdiocese of Chicago can boast of hundreds of priests, regular and secular, doing grand missionary work—new churches, new convents, new schools, new institutions, everywhere. That the clergymen of the archdiocese esteem the Sisters of Mercy and their work, no less now than the clergy of Bishop Quarter's time, is evidenced by the large number of schools they teach in the city and suburbs.

When Rev. Mother Agatha, acting on her former impulse, returned to Pittsburgh, leaving Mother Francis in charge, the Sisters missed the guidance of their father. The arrangement did not meet the approval of some of them; and was not in accordance with the views of Mother Francis, herself. To calm all minds, she wrote shortly after, to Bishop O'Connor, of Pittsburgh, the pathetic words: "The ark is in danger. Send us back our Mother." He answered like a true friend: "Be at rest. She shall return." And she did return, restoring harmony in the community, and releasing Mother Francis from a responsibility she in no wise coveted.

It is matter of record, that Rt. Rev. Michael O'Connor, overwhelmed with the presence of bus-

iness connected with the diocese of Pittsburgh, and ardently desiring a humbler position in the Church, in 1860, petitioned Rome to accept his resignation, which favor was not soon granted, on account of the eminent services he had rendered to religion. When it was granted, the first Bishop of Pittsburgh became a Jesuit priest, though his hair was white with the frosts of years; though he carried the crozier, till he bent beneath its weight.

During one of his missionary journeys, he called at the Convent of Mercy, Chicago, to see the Sister who had implored him to send back her mother. "Who is the superior, now?" he asked the portress, as she dropped on her knees to get his blessing. "I understand, Mother Agatha is dead."

"Mother Francis is Rev. Mother," answered Sister, "and a good Rev. Mother she is."

"Well, tell her that Father Michael O'Connor, formerly, Bishop of Pittsburgh, desires to celebrate mass, and is anxious to catch the first train for the East, after." "Oh, dear! are you a Bishop?" exclaimed Sister in surprise. Isn't it a shame to see you carrying your valise? Couldn't some one——."

Her speech was cut short by Mother Francis, who, in passing, overheard the conversation, dismissed Sister, and showed the Bishop to the chapel, where he promised to remember the soul of Rev. Mother Agatha, one of the first Sisters of Mercy professed by him in Pittsburgh. Indeed, both before, and

after, his resignation, he was a firm friend to the Order he introduced into the United States in 1843; the first Convent of Mercy being opened by him on Penn Street, Pittsburgh; the second, three years later, in Chicago, by Bishop Quarter.

After mass, Mother Francis and he talked about the past—its trials—its difficulties—its blessed portion of the cross—his reasons for resigning the episcopacy—his present happiness as a humble son of Ignatius Loyola. “You have ascended, while I have descended, Mother Francis,” he said. “But, whatever ups and downs are on the pathway of life, our common goal is Calvary, after which comes heaven. Few things have given me more sincere pleasure than the success of the Order of Mercy in Pittsburgh and Chicago. Catherine McAuley’s work is taking deep root in American soil. Nevertheless, knowing that all things human have their ebb and flow, do not be puffed up with prosperity.”

Mother Francis assured him truthfully that she would not, but could not induce him to make use of the convent carriage when leaving, as he persisted in walking back to the depot, again carrying his valise. Rt. Rev. James O’Connor, of Omaha, Nebraska, his brother, took similar interest in the Order of Mercy which he found already established in his diocese by Rt. Rev. James O’Gorman, a Trappist monk of Mount Mellory, Iowa, who invited the Sisters of Mercy there from Manchester, New Hampshire, in, 1865.



Apropos of this mission—the Sisters who were sent on it by Mother Mary Francis Warde, had great difficulty in reaching their destination. The army was disbanding; railroad cars were crowded inside and outside; squads of tramps, a hitherto unknown factor of American civilization, were filling the depots, intimidating travelers. There was no means of transit for the missionary Sisters, who were detained in Chicago for several months.

St. Xavier's was crowded to its utmost capacity. However, the eastern visitors received hospitality. Rev. Mother Francis and other Sisters gave them their cells, sleeping on tables during their stay. They did not always sleep on tables, either, as they frequently rolled off the tables onto the floor—sleeping, nevertheless. The Manchester Sisters, running short of funds, applied to the railroad officials for passes to Omaha, which were refused to them, but not to Mother Francis whose influence procured them.

Having received the passes, they started for Omaha, without being able to reach it. The Missouri River was filled with boats, carrying home Union Soldiers, with boats swarming with men drifting with the tide, who had never been soldiers, accompanied by discharged nurses, ablaze with badges, singing war-songs. They remained on the Iowa side, at Council Bluffs, for a week, amid the roughest surroundings, until the river was passable; then crossed over to Omaha at midnight, guided by

a policeman who brought them to the foot of the hill on which the convent was built, and there left them.

Their troubles were ended when they met Bishop O'Gorman, who gave them a warm welcome to Nebraska. This holy Bishop died in 1874, having been their guide and Father for nine years. He was succeeded by as devoted a friend to the order, Rt. Rev. James O'Connor, who governed them sixteen years, dying in May, 1890. When this zealous prelate was suffering from the illness of which he died, he repaired to Mercy Hospital, Pittsburgh, to be cared for by his brother's first spiritual daughters—the Sisters of Mercy. Miss Catherine Drexel, now Rev. Mother Catherine, Superior of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, who devote their lives to the service of the Indians and Negroes, was making her novitiate in the Convent of Mercy, Pittsburgh, at the time, and received much light in her arduous undertaking from the dying Bishop, with whose approbation she devoted her immense fortune to the cause she had so earnestly at heart.

In 1849, the diocese of Chicago received its second Bishop, Rt. Rev. James O. Vandevelde, during the early part of whose administration a Hospital began to be talked about. The year following, some of the leading medical men of the city, organized a Hospital in the Lake House Hotel, on the North Side, expecting that the increasing traffic on the

Lakes would make it a success. It did not work. They then unanimously agreed to ask the Sisters of Mercy to accept its management, which they did; and things began to look brighter. The number of beds was doubled; the presence of the Sisters who had not hitherto appeared in the crude western Hospitals, assured to the patients careful nursing; and to the doctors a certainty that their directions would be faithfully carried out. "The Illinois General Hospital of the Lake"—so named by the Faculty—enjoyed a gleam of prosperity—temporarily.

It soon became evident to the Sisters that the Hospital was badly located, and they submitted their views, among others, to the Drs. McGirr, father and son, who took a lively interest in the institution when it became "Mercy Hospital." Mother M. Vincent McGirr, local Superior of the Hospital, was the daughter of the elder physician, and sister of the younger one. Proximity to the Lake overran the house with vermin; the smoke and noise of steam-boats, and other undesirable environments, irritated patients. There was little rest to be had in the house. Mother M. Vincent nearly lost her life in preventing an inebriate from jumping from an upper window to drown himself. It was plain that the Illinois General Hospital must be abandoned.

After consulting with the Medical Faculty, it was agreed, that if the Sisters built a Hospital, they would have control of it, assisted by the doctors, who

were to form a regular medical board in connection with it. Mother Francis was appointed to select the site of the building, to be known as Mercy Hospital. South Chicago was considered preferable to the North Side, being nearer to the other institutions, and more convenient for the Sisters, who had often, in going to, or returning from, the Lake House, to stand, an hour at a time, on Lake Street Bridge when boats were passing up and down the river. Opposite the Lake House, the bridge was only a collection of planks chained together, with a rope attachment to hold on to while crossing. In winter this was a perilous feat, and the Sisters went out of their way, to walk across the safer bridge.

Property was booming then. Land Agencies were making—and marring—fortunes. Lots sold so quickly, even at fabulous prices, that disappointed purchasers bought outside the city limits, trusting to luck for results. Mother Francis did not go outside the city limits. There was a green, stagnant swamp on the corner of Van Buren Street and Wabash Avenue for sale. “Why not buy that, Rev. Mother?” she asked after an inspection tour. “It is to be sold, and there is little chance of our being outbid for it.”

“Buy what, Mother Francis? Buy a swamp! No one would buy that,” Rev. Mother replied, shortly. “We can fill it up, and make good ground of it. The finest building in Chicago may stand there yet,” persisted Mother Francis. “It had better be bought quickly, too.”

“Perhaps so, dear. This is a wonderful city. As you understand such matters better than I do. Buy the swamp. God blesses whatever you touch.” The undesirable looking lots were accordingly purchased, and after some delays, Mercy Hospital—on a small scale—was built. An appeal to the public to assist financially, was generously responded to. A few Fairs were held while the Bishop was in Rome, to increase the funds; for which reason, perhaps, when he returned, the Hospital was recorded as diocesan property. He assured the Sisters, however, that when it became self-supporting, he would deed it back to them; which transfer never took place. Mother Francis shed bitter tears afterwards over that Hospital property.

In the sweat of her brow, with the strength of her woman’s arm, urged on by an indomitable will, she assisted in filling up the swamp, while superintending the work. The Hospital, with a small frame building in the rear to serve for an Orphanage, was opened at last, to the great delight of the doctors, who from first to last devoted themselves to its interests. Rev. Mother Agatha knew that Chicago had already many orphans, whose parents had succumbed to malarial fevers, dissipation, or blighted hopes. She did not think the time had come to establish an Orphanage, as the Sisterhood was small, the finances inconsiderable, and no outside provision for the purpose was spoken of. She thought, too,

that Mother Francis' zeal was a little daring. Her Mentor, Mother Francis, notwithstanding, importuned her to open the Orphanage.

"We must care for the orphans, as well as for the sick," she said with her usual persistence. "I met a poor woman on the street to-day, with three shivering children, whom she begged us, for God's sake, to take charge of; otherwise they must starve. Her husband died last week of delirium tremens, and she refuses point blank to go to the poor-house. What will you do if they are left at the door?"

"We will consult the Bishop, and do as he directs," replied Rev. Mother. "But, how are the orphans to be supported? It is no light undertaking, Mother Francis," which remark remained uncontradicted. However, as is usual on such occasions, the more ardent spirit prevailed over the less ardent one, and the Orphan Asylum, with the Bishop's consent, but with no specified arrangements for its support, was opened shortly after the opening of the Hospital—mainly through the instrumentality of Mother Francis. Its first contingent were the waifs she met on the street.

## CHAPTER V.

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HIGH SCHOOLS. SODALITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.  
JUDGE HARRINGTON. EXPERIENCE OF A CONVERT.  
CHICAGO'S FIRST STATUE. DEATH OF THE SCULPTOR.

AT an early period the Sisters opened a night-school for domestic servants and others, who had not received a rudimentary education; but who were willing to begin by learning the alphabet, that they might afterwards read their prayer books at mass. Some of them were old toilers in the labor world; others, blooming young girls commencing to earn wages; all, determined to learn to read and write, for two purposes—assisting properly at mass, and corresponding with their friends in Ireland.

Mother Francis and other Sisters devoted an hour each evening to the instruction of these women, depriving themselves of their evening recreation—the only recreation they had. Knowledge of Catholic doctrines, and their duty as members of the church, were little understood, therefore, the catechism had to be taught and explained. As most of them were unable to read even a primer, Mother Francis



adopted the plan of reading aloud alternately with an assistant, both questions and answers; the girls repeating in chorus what they heard read. The plan—not a new one—succeeded admirably, and the catechism was soon known from cover to cover. It was a strain on the Sisters to spend the day in crowded school rooms, and their evenings in this gratuitous work of charity, but they were well repaid by the results.

The pupils of the night-school, with few exceptions, became exemplary members of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, and were so highly esteemed by their Protestant employers, that Sodalists obtained the best domestic situations in the city. A Rev. Mr. C., afterwards an Anglican Bishop, having two of them in his household for many years, declared when they left, the loss of a dear relative would give him little less pain than the loss of these faithful servitors.

They were loyal to each other, as well as to their employers. Many a time, after a hard day's work in the kitchen, dining-room, or laundry, they were to be found watching, by turns, at the bed-side of a suffering sodalist, stricken down by fever, away up on the top floor of a six-story Chicago hotel. The Sisters who made the visitation, often found them there, fearless of contagion for themselves.

One of them, a house-keeper, who lived in the home of Judge Arrington, for some time previous to



his death, helped to bring about his conversion to Catholicity in a remarkable way. Two of the Judge's daughters, pursuing their studies at St. Mary's Academy, South Bend, Indiana, were so charmed with the beauty of Catholic faith, as there practiced, that they became Catholics themselves. Mrs. Judge Arrington, who frequently visited them, followed her children's example. The great Chicago jurist was so displeased with their change of creed, that a long estrangement of hearts between himself and his family existed, and two separate establishments were talked of.

Even when death approached, he refused to be reconciled to them. Mrs. Arrington and her daughters, were overwhelmed with sorrow, and feared to enter his room. The house-keeper understood how matters were. "Ladies," she said, coming into the parlor where the three were weeping, "stop your crying, and pray for him. I will keep on saying the rosary at his door—if he wont let me in—until he asks to be baptized as well as the rest of you." They had been saying the rosary for that intention. The sick man did not like to die, and told Mary—the house-keeper, and the only attendant he tolerated in his presence—to speak to him no more of death, and if he had to die, to keep away from him. "Indeed, then, I will not keep away from you," she said, "I will stay in the hall, with your door open, and watch you, and pray for you." Not being vouchsafed an

answer, she knelt down in the hall, and began to recite the rosary aloud. Judge Arrington, unable to leave his bed, used language more forcible than polite, to silence her.

Mary knelt for more than two hours, forgetful of everything but the human soul she was determined to assist in saving. The eloquent, and learned, dying Chicago Judge, and the humble, zealous Sodalist, were alone before God, in the struggle with death. "Mary," he called out, at last, in a voice that startled her, "bring me a priest. I want to be baptized quickly. I am dying now, and desire to die a catholic." "Thank God," exclaimed the girl, rising from her knees to go in search of a priest. One happened to be passing, Rev. Father Conway, afterwards, Vicar General of Chicago, who was soon by Judge Arrington's bed-side, administering to him the sacraments of the Church. He said afterwards, that he found the Judge fully informed of all Catholic doctrines.

Mrs. Arrington asked Mother Francis, to prepare a suitable shroud for her dead husband, and to allow the Sisters to clothe him with it themselves. All of which Mother Francis complied with. The body, draped in Catholic burial robes, was placed in a coffin in the parlor. Two lighted wax tapers, and a crucifix, at the head of the coffin, two kneeling Sisters of Mercy, at the foot, met the astonished gaze of the members of the bar, who assembled to make a visit

of condolence. Some beautiful verses written by Judge Arrington during life, in praise of the Blessed Virgin, appeared in the "Ave Maria" after his death. He was fully reconciled to his wife and children before departing.

A Lutheran Norwegian, also a convert to Catholicity, fearing to incur her father's anger, had not told him of her baptism. He suspected it, nevertheless, seeing her leave the convent one Sunday in the ranks of the Sodality, to enter St. Mary's Church. Dissembling his feelings until night, when she was retiring to rest, he attacked her with a knife. "If you have become a Catholic," he cried in furious tones, stabbing her twice, though not vitally, "I will kill you."

The horrified girl, seeing murder in his face, and feeling blood oozing from her wounds, sprang from the bed, dashed through the window, and ran down the street in her blood-stained wrapper, not once slackening her race for life until she reached the convent, eight blocks distant. She rang the bell violently for help, fainting in the hall when admitted. Baffled in his design, and disconcerted by her flight, her father made no attempt to follow.

The portress recognizing her, by Mother Francis' direction, dressed her wounds and made her comfortable for the night. Learning that her aunt lived a short distance from the city, she was sent there by rail next morning, attired in an outfit provided by

the Sisters. She was safe there. Shortly after her departure, her father called to learn her whereabouts; expressing unfeigned regret for what he had done. "I come here," he said, "because I know she would go nowhere else. Since the death of my wife, I had only this child to live for, yet, hatred of Catholicity prompted me to take her life. If she will return to me again, she may live according to her convictions."

Mother Francis seeing by his tears that he was sincere in what he said, gave him his daughter's address, exacting a solemn promise that there would be no repetition of the past. He made the promise and kept it. In a few weeks, both father and daughter called to thank her for what she had done, and eventually, the man became a Catholic.

It was for this Sodality the first statue ever made in Chicago, was carved—a marble statue of the Blessed Virgin. Sister M. Baptist, a devoted client of Mary, was president of the Sodality. She learned that two Germans, a father and son, proprietors of a marble-yard on State Street, engraved monuments artistically. The idea suggested itself, that they might be induced to try their skill on a statue. Mother Francis, entering into her views, commenced a novena for that intention, in which Sisters and Sodalists joined. At the conclusion of the novena, the application was made, and promptly rejected by the father, who declared he had never done anything

of the kind, and was too old to try. The son consented, if the Sisters procured him a model, and gave him their views from time to time; which was done. During these interviews, Mary being the only theme of conversation, her name became rooted in the young man's heart. His father and he were infidels. He had never heard her spoken of, except in scorn. The work was carried on secretly at first. But when the beautiful figure hidden in the marble block began to reveal itself, the older man, who saw it accidentally, could not refrain from expressing admiration.

While chiseling the features of Mary, the sculptor's genius was developed. He secreted his work no more. Unfortunately, he developed not only genius, but consumption; failing rapidly as the statue neared completion. The Sisters prayed that he might live to finish it, and he did. Mother Francis, knowing that his heart was in his work, and seeing, he could not last much longer, besought him to see a priest, as Mary would be sure to bring about his conversion.

He told her, he ardently desired to become a Catholic before dying, as he had learned to love Christ's Mother, while reproducing her in marble. Therefore, wished to belong to the only church that honored her. The statue, when finished, was taken to the convent to be placed in an oratory prepared to receive it—but, the sculptor was dying.

It required skillful management on the part of the Sisters to visit him after that, as his father was determined he would not die under Catholic influence. He did not absolutely refuse to let the Sisters see him, he only stipulated that he should be present when they were there. Sister M. Baptist arranged matters so nicely, that the old gentleman permitted the Sisters to see the dying youth alone a few times. That point gained, paved the way for another.

She begged him to allow a priest to visit his boy—just once. He yielded again, and during that—just once—the Sacraments of the Church were administered to the fervent neophyte. The priest called no more, he did not need to, as next day the sculptor was dead. Mary took him to heaven before he had a chance to sully his baptismal robe.

During the great fire of 1871, the head of this beautiful statue was knocked off by debris falling on it, and both arms were broken. The headless trunk is preserved in a grotto, in the garden of the House of Mercy, where fresh flowers are daily placed before it, in thanksgiving for the Sisters' marvelous escapes from the fire. Few who know its history, look upon it without remembering the soul of him who owed his salvation to the Mother of God.

The first marble altar erected in Chicago, was a gift of the Sisters to Rev. Mother Francis, on the Feast of her Patron, St. Francis de Sales. It was

greatly admired, and was intact when the fire broke out. The fierce heat of the burning city and convent, reduced it to a heap of white ashes, piled up on the spot where it once stood. A Chicago man made this altar. In connection with the Sodality, though later in time, another incident may be mentioned. As soon as the House of Providence was opened as a home for working-girls, it was filled. Among the boarders were several Protestant lady-clerks, Protestant in name only, having no special religious beliefs. Four were so impressed with the reverence of the Catholic girls during the hours of prayer, at which all were required to attend, that they asked to be instructed for baptism; and after due course of instruction, were publicly baptized in St. Mary's Church. This caused a sensation in non-catholic circles.

A Revivalist, Mr. M—— who was then beginning to attract public attention, called at the Home to ask if undue influence had not something to do with these so-called conversions to Catholicity. The Sister in charge replied, that his question could be best answered by the converts themselves, and bringing them to him, she withdrew. The conference—a long one—resulted in disabusing Mr. M.'s mind of the idea of undue influence; each of the girls declaring that the choice she had made was her own deliberate act. However, one of them afterwards recanted, while the others remained firm.

Mr. M——, a Chicago gentleman, told Sister,



before leaving, that *he* would open a Home for Girls, to be controlled by the various Church Organizations of the City; as an offset to the workings of the Home conducted by the Sisters of Mercy. "Perhaps, we will make converts, too," he added. He was an earnest worker; had much influence; and the new Home was soon opened with *clat*, on West Randolph Street, in a rented house. The event was announced from many pulpits. The newspapers described, among other attractions, its library, music-room, reception-room, and all modern improvements. The Sisters of Mercy had no such comforts to offer—nothing but a plainly-furnished house, and good board. Rev. Mother Francis trembled lest her Sodalists and others would be tempted by "the flesh-pots of Egypt."

One of the first persons to enter Mr. M.'s Home, was the convert who recanted. Once domiciled, she brooked no control. A semi-fashionable set of boarders availed themselves of the advantages of the luxurious institution, gave parties, received visitors. The matron vainly endeavored to enforce observance of rule. Her directions were disregarded, and, as a finale, the recanted convert unintentionally set fire to the house—which was burned to the ground—in making preparations for a grand supper. The enterprise was finally abandoned, and no substitute took its place. Mother Francis' fears proved groundless, and the House of Providence "pursued the even tenor of its way."



## CHAPTER VI.

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THE CHOLERA. DEATH OF REV. MOTHER AGATHA,  
AND OTHER SISTERS. RT. REV. ANTHONY O'REGAN.  
BISHOP SMITH, ADMINISTRATOR. MOTHER FRANCIS,  
SUPERIOR. ST. AGATHA'S ACADEMY. SISTERS VISIT  
THE JAIL. BISHOP DUGGAN'S EXPERIENCE WITH A  
PRISONER.

FOR many years the Hospital did not pay expenses. The poor, its chief patrons, were often boarded gratuitously. The Commissioners of Cook County, contemplating the erection of a County Hospital, in the near future, gave little help—keeping the sick poor in the Alms-House, or paying low rates for those they sent to the Hospital. Taking all things into consideration, it was with difficulty kept open; and but for the exertions of its firm friends—the doctors—who sent paying patients whenever they could, Mercy Hospital, like the Lake House Hospital, would have been closed.

The Sisters, however, bore the monetary strain, as souls were saved, and suffering was alleviated. Mother Francis assisted in the work of the Hospital,

whenever she could, though having scant leisure. During these arduous times, Rev. Mother Agatha declared, she could not have borne the burden of office without Mother Francis' assistance. A postulant who saw her washing dishes, said to another postulant: "How humble Mother Francis is. I thought only postulants and novices washed dishes."

The shadow of the cross, in the shadow of death, was again approaching. In the summer of 1854, Asiatic Cholera broke out in Chicago, spreading with frightful rapidity. More than fourteen hundred people were carried off by it, and burials—not always of the dead—were of hourly occurrence. The Sisters who visited the homes of the plague-stricken, found appalling mortality in the poorer districts.

Rev. Mother took her turn on the visitation, as well as the rest. In a deserted house in an alley, a father, mother and two children, struggled in the throes of the plague. For twenty-four hours no human being had gone near them. People would not risk their lives. Two Sisters passing through the neighborhood, hearing of the shocking fact, went in to give such assistance as they could, and soon a figure appeared in the door-way.

"Are your children dead yet?" asked a gentleman's voice in which a slight tremor might be detected. "Come in and see," replied one of the Sisters. "Come in! not for the world! I am the

pastor of a congregation, and cannot expose either my family or my congregation to the danger of contagion. The city officials should take charge of this case, which is injuring the locality. But, are there strangers inside?"

"Yes, the Sisters of Mercy. Won't you come in?" "I admire your courage, Sisters, although prudence forbids me to imitate it," he said, suddenly disappearing from the door-way, and they saw him no more. One hour later, a priest prepared the parents for their passage to eternity. The children were already dead. This was not an isolated case. There were many such. Neither was the cholera confined to the non-sanitary parts of Chicago. It found its way into wealthy homes, like a destroying angel, leaving the dead to mark its path.

On the evening of July 7th, Rev. Mother Agatha returned from the visitation, showing symptoms of cholera. She had scarcely strength enough to reach the infirmary, when three other Sisters, also prostrated by cholera, lay writhing in pain. "Darling Rev. Mother, are we all to die together? What will become of us if you leave us?" exclaimed the infirmarian, in an agony of tears. "It will kill Mother Francis."

"Whatever God wills, is best," murmured Rev. Mother, to whom the last sacraments were immediately administered, as she was becoming unconscious. She did not speak again. There was one,

however, who knew no fear, even in that extremity—brave, faithful Mother Francis. To lose Rev. Mother was the saddest blow of her life, and she saw that she must face it. All through the weary night she watched by the dying Mother whom no human skill could save. Her heart was breaking. Her spirit never quailed. Towards morning, Mother Agatha passed quietly away, the victim of Catholic charity.

Mother Francis, intensely saddened, wondered at her own calmness during that unlooked-for death-scene. She shed no tears; there are griefs too deep for them. The other Sisters died about the same time as Rev. Mother. A profound sensation was produced next day, by seeing so many Sisters carried to their graves from the convent on Wabash Avenue.

At the close of the cholera season, Rt. Rev. Anthony O'Regan, became Bishop of Chicago, in consequence of the resignation of Bishop Vandevelde, who was transferred to the See of Natches. On the death of Rev. Mother Agatha, Mother M. Paul Ruth was elected Superior, and died the following year. Mother M. Vincent McGirr succeeded her; but the loss of so many senior members made itself felt; school attendance decreased; finances were low; more teaching Sisters were needed, but applications had ceased.

For the first time in the history of St. Xavier's a

gloom settled over it. For the first time, too, strange to say, the Sisters intuitively thought of Mother Francis for Superior. The time had come when a pilot must stand at the helm. There are foldings of the human heart difficult to unravel. Cultured people sometimes do not take broad enough views of things. The bread-winners often do not get the credit they deserve. Yet culture, without a knowledge of business, would do only a half finished work—the soul gifts of Martha and Mary, combined, being necessary for its completion.

Be it as it may, when Mother Vincent's term of office expired, there was a general restoration of confidence, on finding that Mother Francis was to succeed her. Rev. Mother Vincent had labored under difficulties she could not control, few feeling more keenly than herself the wants that were not easily supplied. Now, however, a feeling of security succeeded to the unrest of insecurity.

Rt. Rev. Clement Smith was temporary administrator of the diocese of Chicago, after Bishop O'Regan's departure. In Bishop Vandeveld's time, complications had arisen that Bishop O'Regan could not satisfactorily arrange, and Chicago was again left without a bishop. It may be remarked, that, although the future of Catholicity in Illinois already foreshadowed its coming greatness, the actual finances were not adequate to the demands made upon Bishop O'Regan; hence, he desired to secure a sufficient

church revenue by the acquisition of real estate, in which attempt he was not successful. With permission of the Holy Father he went to England in 1858, and died there in 1865.

An era of prosperity again dawned upon the Sisters of Mercy under the guidance of their new Superior. Several talented subjects entered and persevered. The neglected lots attached to the convent became a blooming garden, sheltered by the shadow of St. Mary's Church. The empty treasury was replenished, glory was given to God. •

Pupils were so numerous that an outlet had to be made. Mother Francis, always on the alert, said to the Sisters, "Another Academy ought to be built further south where a school is needed. The business men of Chicago will give us time and credit. It will soon pay for itself, even if it involves sacrifice at first."

Her proposal—the necessity of which was evident—met the approval of the community, and she set to work forthwith. There was a block for sale on easy terms, bounded on three sides, by Calumet Avenue, Prairie Avenue and Twenty-Sixth Street, which became convent property. This was considered a great venture for the Sisters, who called the new building when completed, St. Agatha's Seminary, in memory of Rev. Mother Agatha O'Brien.

People wondered where the money came from, as it was pretty generally known, the Hospital, in order

to keep it running, was partially supported by the private funds of the convent. They did not reflect that one secret of success in monastic institutions is the vow of poverty. Receiving, and expecting nothing, but food and clothing, the revenue derived from the mental or manual labor of religious persons, is devoted to the furtherance of the special work of each congregation—primarily, to the glory of God. So secure a fund does this vow observed in its integrity, create, that portionless applicants possessing solid virtue, are seldom refused admission into religious houses.

In this particular instance, the Sisters were relieved of anxiety by a generous building contractor, who erected the Academy with his own money, promising to wait until Mother Francis could repay him, which was not a very long time. The public did not know this, and hence the wonder.

As the Sisters of Mercy were the pioneer religious of Chicago, the duty of teaching, at present divided between a dozen or more different Orders, at that time entirely devolved upon them. As did also, visitation of the sick from one extremity of the city to the other; visitation of prisoners in jails and bridewells; visits of condolence to homes of misfortune, or family jars; with occasional calls at the poor-house, whence they seldom emerged without bringing with them *living* proofs of the uncleanness of the place.



To the smallest details of these duties, Mother Francis gave, when possible, personal supervision; and many a weary mile was travelled by her in search of the friendless and the outcast, to whom her presence brought cheer and blessing. No wonder, that her name became a household word in the stirring scenes through which she passed. No wonder that the Hospital, Schools, and Asylum, could not contain the numbers that claimed the Sisters care, as the marvelous increase in population added thousands to the city's yearly record. But they cheerfully bore the burdens of the day, and are now the owners of some of the finest architectural institutions in Chicago.

Speaking of prison visits, once, two Sisters were sent to console, or rather control, a batch of female prisoners confined in the jail under the Court House. "We can't do a thing with them, Sisters," said the jailer, opening the cell-door to admit them. Perhaps you can bring them to reason before we are compelled to use hand-cuffs. They are Catholics who are a disgrace to the church."

Noticing that he was going to lock them in, the Sisters explained that they could only remain one hour, as they had other calls to make.

"All right," he said, looking at his watch, "it is nine o'clock now, I will be back at ten, to let you out."

But he was not back at ten, and the Sisters were



for nine long hours incarcerated with the erring women, filling up the time as best they could; and accepting with, at least, outward composure, the disagreeableness of the situation. The prisoners were "on punishment" for general disregard of prison rule, and got no dinner. In the meantime, the Sisters prayed, advised, recited the rosary, without visible effect, as the women continued to be noisy; persistently declaring they were innocent of law-breaking.

"I felt weak coming out of church," said one, "and a drink of peppermint upset me. That is why I'm here."

"I took a loan of a plush cloak from a store on State Street, intending to return it next day. And just because I forgot to return it, they locked me up," explained another.

"My sister-in-law and I had a few words on the street, about nothing at all, and the next thing I knew, as true as I tell it to you, I was put where you see me," remarked the third.

"Jim is on a strike, Sister, and because we cheered him when he spoke at the meeting, we must stand a trial. I am one of the we, and protest against the tyranny of the law," added the most intelligent looking prisoner in the group.

"By what you say," ventured one of the Sisters, "this jail is a temporary home for saints—not sinners." "Saints or sinners, you are with us for this

day, any way, Sister," said the prisoner who had not yet spoken. "Try the rosary again, and may be we will do better."

The rosary was said a seventh time, and grace prevailed. Tears were flowing from hardened eyes, promises of amendment were fervently made, as the jailer turned the key in the lock at 6 o'clock p. m. Never was the click of a lock sweeter to the Sisters ears than on that occasion. The prisoners were hungry and quiet. "A thousand pardons, Sisters," he said in trepidation. "I forgot all about you, and know that apologies will not atone for my neglect. Please do not report me to the authorities. If you do, I will lose my place, and my wife and children will suffer for my bad memory." The apology was accepted and the Sisters left, glad to have effected some spiritual good during their accidental durance. When Bishop Duggan heard of it, he said to Mother Francis: "The Sisters were lucky to get off with such a short term of imprisonment. When I was chaplain at the Four Courts Jail, in St. Louis, Missouri, I was locked up for twelve mortal hours, by mistake, of course, with a prisoner under sentence of death for murder. He was a fierce Missouri outlaw, although a Catholic; and would have inflicted bodily injury on me but for his heavy iron manacles.

"Finding that my efforts to reconcile him with God, were useless, and understanding by the jailor's absence that I was not going to get out of there be-

fore the night-watch, I resigned myself to fate, read my breviary, recited the rosary aloud—he could not prevent that—and, at last, blessed be God! I heard him say in a voice tremulous with emotion: ‘Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me now, and at the hour of my death. Father Duggan, I will make my confession. May God have mercy on my soul.’

“Here, indeed, was the change of the right hand of the Most High. This man, who, in the morning, whenever I approached the subject of confession, declared angrily: ‘God knows all about that murder. He could have prevented it, if He wanted to. Since He did not, and I am going to perdition, anyhow, not one word either you or He, will learn from me about it. You had better get out of here, or I may do you harm now, when the Mother of God, through means of the rosary spoke to his heart, he wept like a wayward child, and asked to receive the rites of the church.

“You may be sure I felt well repaid for the day passed in that convict cell; and had the consolation of administering the last sacraments to a truly repentant sinner. Tell the Sisters that their Bishop once had the same prison experience as themselves; and that neither need be ashamed to own it.”

## CHAPTER VII.

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ST. AGATHA'S ACADEMY. DRS. N. S. DAVIS AND E. BYFORD, IN CONNECTION WITH MERCY HOSPITAL. FAIRS FOR THE ORPHAN ASYLUM. THE SISTERS OF CHARITY, B. V. M. PURCHASE OF THE FIFTY ACRES. NOW A BOULEVARD. ERECTION OF A NEW ST. XAVIER'S ACADEMY. NORRY AND TIM CALLAGHAN.

As Mother Francis had predicted, the indebtedness on St. Agatha's was soon cleared. It out-rivalled in popularity the old—and in the light of modern equipments—the old-fashioned academic halls of St. Xavier's. School facilities in the early fifties were not as elegant as now. There were neither elevator-ascensions, gymnasiums, nor steam-heating. But, the brawn and the brain were there; nor could these things, progressive, and tone-giving though they be, add one whit to the sterling worth of the first schools taught by the Sisters of Mercy in Chicago.

The fame of the Sisters as teachers, like, Mother Francis popularity, was not confined to Illinois. On their registers appeared the names of pupils from Missouri, California, Ohio, Colorado and other states.

Many of them were proficient in music, painting, drawing, elocution, embroidery, mathematics, and other branches of a liberal education.

Their parochial schools, where no charge was made for tuition, were filled with pupils who received instructions suited to their sphere in life. The first frame church in Chicago, being superseded by a nobler structure, was used for years as a free school in the rear of St. Mary's Church. A visitor of note at St. Agatha's, was Senator Stephen A. Douglas, shortly before his defeat for the Presidency, when rumors of war were afloat. In return, Mother Francis sent Sisters to visit him when he lay on his death-bed in a Chicago hotel, and he thanked them for coming. The Sisters visit, together with the fact, that Bishop Duggan delivered an eloquent oration at Senator Douglas' grave, gave rise to a supposition that he became a Catholic before he died. The supposition was incorrect.

Notwithstanding the prosperity of the Academy, the hospital was still not self-supporting. In the nature of things, the Asylum was not self-supporting. Both charities were assisted from the revenues of the schools. "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," is a scriptural injunction, in compliance with which, Mother Francis spoke little about the poverty of these institutions.

It is but just to say, that Dr. N. S. Davis, and Surgeon E. Andrews, notably, with other medical

gentlemen, gave the hospital their almost undivided attention during the first struggling years of its existence; aiding the Sisters as best they could in its humanitarian work. They foresaw grand results, after the monetary depression passed away, as did Mother Francis, herself. When called upon, they were in attendance. When not called upon, they were there, too, anxious and successful in procuring it patronage. These gentlemen, respectively at the head of their professions to-day, are not Catholics, but they are philanthropists in the broadest sense of the word. Each has a son following his father's noble calling—like them, attaining eminence. The fame of this now splendid hospital is largely due to them.

Students from different parts of the country, who have attended their hospital clinics, proudly refer to them as medical educators; the suffering of every nationality and creed, revere them; the Sisters of Mercy thank them for their unwearied assistance in the hospital, where they have acted not only as friends, but fathers, neither asking nor receiving a dollar for their services. All honor, then, to the names of Dr. N. S. Davis and Surgeon E. Andrews!

Nor must the Specialist, Dr. E. Byford, be forgotten in connection with Mercy Hospital of Chicago, He did his full share of gratuitous labor there; procured it patronage; and helped to raise it to its present high standing, although he did not worship at the same altar with the Sisters.

Examples like these, are bright oasis in the desert of life, where philanthropists are few enough. America has some, however.

To return, it must be admitted that annual Fairs for the benefit of the Orphan Asylum were held, and were at first well patronized. If they were not, the Supervisors of Cook County would have been obliged to support the Orphans by imposing an additional tax. As it was, they did not appropriate a dollar to help the Sisters—gave it no thought.

But Fairs are not perennial plants, always blooming, always bearing fruit. They ceased to interest the public, to a certain extent, in the course of years; consequently, this source of revenue decreased. Neither was the Asylum an inviting residence, as the Sisters acknowledged; but no one offered to erect a better one; and after building St. Agatha's, Mother Francis could not afford to build again. A few prominent citizens knew this, and sympathized with her, but some of the Clergy asked, perhaps, without reflection: "Why did not Mother Francis build an Asylum? Fairs were held for the Asylum. They have paid well. We cannot understand it."

The inuendo reaching Mother Francis' ears, pierced her to the quick. She was silent however, as she always was when unjustly judged. And so the thing went on, adding yearly to the Sisters burdens. In the meantime, Rt. Rev. Bishop O'Regan left Chicago, and during the interregnum that followed, Bishop

Smith of Dubuque, officially visited the diocese. A beautiful trait of Mother Francis' character may be mentioned here.

The sisters of Charity, B. V. M. of Dubuque, founded by Rev. T. J. Donaghoe of St. Michael's Church, Philadelphia, and Mother Mary Clarke, of Dublin, Ireland, were still in the first stage of existence as a religious body. No formal rule had been adopted—no confirmation by Rome received. A certain looseness, so to speak, existed, or was supposed to exist.

As in every other congregation, some aspirants for ascetic life entered on probation, and left of their own accord, or were requested to leave, as the case might be. Persons of this description often describe their brief experience at the expense of truth. Simply entering a convent does not make one impeccable. The passions inherent to human nature remain to be conquered; and those who know least about the struggle, are frequently its severest critics.

Bishop Smith, himself a strict disciplinarian, and a regularly observant Trappist, even on the episcopal throne, felt inspired to precipitate matters, by introducing more formal conventualism among the Sisters of his diocese. He knew that the Order of Mercy was confirmed by Rome in 1840; he knew of Mother Francis' phenomenal powers of government; therefore, asked her to send some members of her community to exemplify the life of a confirmed order to the Sisterhood in Dubuque.



“Oh! Bishop! how could I do that?” she exclaimed, humility and justice making her shrink from the proposal. “There are exemplary women in that congregation, which is not yet matured. The Foundress, a person of large experience, is noted for her wisdom and sanctity. Wait a while, and they will adopt a rule suited to themselves. Patience is all that is necessary.”

Bishop Smith understood by the answer that she did not intend to reap where she had not sown; and that neither would she, without a positive command, pretend to lead to higher spirituality people already far advanced in the science of the saints; part of which science was acquired during the Philadelphia riots, when the Knownothings burned their convent to the ground.

Disappointed, therefore, but disappointed like a son of Saint Bruno, he pressed the matter no further; returned regretfully to Dubuque; and never saw either Mother Francis or Chicago again. His holy death occurred, September 22, 1865, and Mother Francis' prediction regarding the Sisters of Charity, B. V. M. was fulfilled to the letter. They have since become a flourishing community, and have adopted a rule specially selected for them in Rome.

In the early days, when Mother Agatha was Superior, Mother Francis induced her to buy fifty acres of unbroken prairie in the suburbs of South Chicago; or rather, she purchased them, herself, presuming on

permission, during the temporary absence of Mother Agatha, acquainting her of the fact afterwards.

"I thought you would not object, Rev. Mother," she said. "The land is cheap, and so many were negotiating for it that in another hour it would have been lost to us. I hope I have done nothing very wrong."

"Oh, no, nothing wrong, of course, although you ought to have awaited my return. But it *seems* foolish to buy on the prairie. We can not use it to any advantage just now," answered Rev. Mother, who in her heart believed Mother Francis purchased well.

"Indeed we can, begging your pardon," returned smiling Mother Francis, who was sure, beforehand, of forgiveness. "We can raise live stock on it, and have plenty of milk, butter, chickens and eggs, for the orphans, as well as for ourselves. (She never forgot the orphans.) Chicago may be flooded by the Lake, yet, or burned down. When that happens, which God avert, our suburban farm will be worth its weight in gold; indeed, may be the saving of the community."

"Perhaps so, dear," answered Rev. Mother. "It is bought; and something must be done with it,"

Another verified prediction of Mother Francis was that expected Chicago fire. True enough, when the city was actually burned down, in 1871, the farm was the mainstay of the Sisters. Insurance companies being unable to meet their enormous liabilities with

them, or with any one else, the sale of a portion of this property helped to cover the losses caused by the burning of the academy on Wabash avenue, built by Mother Francis at the close of the war.

Beside this, stood the first Convent of Mercy, that had also been an academy, old St. Xavier's, then a House of Providence for the reception of poor girls out of work until they obtained employment, and for girls clerking in stores, who preferred the quiet of a home conducted by the Sisters to the promiscuously crowded boarding houses of a great city. Attached to it was an intelligence office for procuring situations for servants, that proved a blessing to all concerned. Both of these institutions were reduced to heaps of ashes by one of the fiercest conflagrations the world has ever seen—the burning of Chicago.

Far-seeing, provident Mother Francis! The fifty-acre prairie, the breaking of which she superintended, is now a splendid suburb of the city—boulevards, shaded avenues, princely mansions are to be seen, where the sweat of her brow fell on the soft grass.

By further exchanges of the farm, the Sisters built, and are gradually paying off the debt on, the present St. Xavier's Academy, whose unique proportions and architectural beauty attract the attention and win the admiration of every beholder. A few acres were reserved upon which to erect another institution that has since become necessary—a noviti-

ate, away from the noise and bustle of the queen city of the lakes,

Concerning the farm, it may be remarked that a Mr. Tim Callaghan and his wife, Norry, were placed there as care-takers. They had been faithful servants, both at the academy and hospital, and on their marriage Mother Francis gave them five acres of the fifty, to cultivate for themselves. She unconsciously gave them a fortune.

Tim died when their second son was born, and Mrs. Callaghan, uncouth as she was, became the legal guardian of his children. In the course of time, widowed Mrs. Callaghan and her surroundings were considered a nuisance in the rapidly rising, aristocratic neighborhood. She was offered a, to her, fabulous sum for the five acres. It amazed her and surprised the Sisters. The farm was a bonanza.

"Is it sell the land blessed Mother Francis deeded to Tim Callaghan and me you mean?" she asked the lawyer deputed by aristocracy to buy her out, adding, without waiting for an answer: "Not a bit of it. I'm not ready to sell, and I don't intend to move, as the place is my own. Maybe you understand that."

Mrs. Callaghan wisely concluded that, if he was speaking in good faith, she could get more money for it.

Notwithstanding her refusal, the offer was repeated, the price being raised with each offer, until wide-

awake Norry was satisfied, and sold. Her two sons, educated at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, became business men of good social standing, who always revered the name of Mother Francis, their benefactress.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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RT. REV. JAMES DUGGAN BECOMES BISHOP OF CHICAGO. PROPERTY MATTERS A SOURCE OF DIFFICULTIES FOR MANY YEARS. PROPOSAL TO PLACE THE ORPHAN ASYLUM UNDER THE CONTROL OF LAYMEN, REFUSED BY MOTHER FRANCIS. THE ASYLUM GIVEN TO THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH. REV. JOHN WALDRON, THE FRIEND OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY. SALE OF PROPERTY NECESSITATES REMOVAL OF THE HOSPITAL.

IN 1859, Rt. Rev. James Duggan was transferred from the diocese of St. Louis, to the diocese of Chicago, which at that period had attained vast proportions. Of imposing presence, gifted with courteous manners, scholarly, brilliant, a fine pulpit orator, Bishop Duggan soon won golden opinions. The hope was entertained that, under his sway, pre-existing clerical differences would disappear. It was not to be so.

During the early part of his ten years episcopacy, nothing peculiar was noticed in him. He was the most popular ecclesiastic in Chicago, beloved by Protestants and Catholics alike. Dressed in his epis-

copal robes, in his private carriage, he was conspicuous in the funeral cortège of Senator Stephen A. Douglas, and duly lauded for his gracious presence.

When the dead body of the murdered President, Abraham Lincoln, was carried through the land in sad and solemn procession, Bishop Duggan conceived the idea that Catholics—as such—should pay honor to his remains. He accordingly asked Mother Francis, with whom he lived on terms of strictest friendship, to send the boarders of St. Xavier's to his house on the avenue, in mourning costume.

She did so. Seventy-five young ladies dressed in white, wearing long black scarfs, marshalled themselves on either side of the Bishop, who stood with uncovered head in the centre, on the balcony of his residence, before which the half-military, half-civic pageant of death must pass. When it filed by, the group on the balcony was the cynosure of all eyes. Bishop Duggan's unique display of patriotism was acknowledged by a salute of artillery.

In recognition of Mother Francis' many kindnesses, he had two life-size portraits of himself painted by Mr. Healy, the celebrated Chicago artist, one of which he reserved for his episcopal palace; the other, adjudged by many to be the finer of the two, he presented to Mother Francis, who had it conspicuously placed in the reception room of the Academy. He rarely looked at either, and never without feeling a depression of spirits.

Several religious orders of men and women had been introduced into the diocese—all succeeded—all were overtaxed with labor. The vacancies made by the priests who left during Bishop Vandevælde's incumbency, were not yet satisfactorily filled. The Bishop could not please every one in his appointments. Father Chiniquy's unfortunate schism at Bourbonnais, gave him great annoyance. He requested Mother Francis and the Sisters to join with him in prayer for its suppression. They did, and in a few years the deluded people, without an exception, returned to their duty as Catholics.

From her longer residence in Chicago, she was sometimes able to make suggestions of which he approved. Yet his gentle spirit was unable to cope with the difficulties that confronted him. A marked excitability in his manner became visible; and thenceforth his official acts gave umbrage. A Sister, sent to him on business, noticed in his wildly-flushing eye the symptoms of insanity. She remarked it to Mother Francis, who was inexpressibly shocked, although she had misgivings of his condition. This unfortunate fact explained much of the unpleasantness that existed during his latter years in Chicago. He was not morally responsible for what he did. In 1869, his mental powers were so wrecked that he was placed by friends in an institute where he is tenderly cared for.

As Bishop Quarter died intestate, property diffi-



culties began in Mother Agatha's time, although it was known that he intended to give the Sisters real estate in North Chicago for school purposes. His brother, Father William Quarter, gave them the deed of this property afterward. In looking over church affairs, Bishop Vandeveldt objected to this, alleging that the ground was too valuable for convent buildings. The Sisters refused to give him the deed. Mother Agatha, who was charity personified, for peace sake, thought of yielding, rather than have misunderstanding. Mother Francis urged her to hold the deed, as the Sisters owned no other property, and this rightfully belonged to them; so she remained firm.

Afterwards, Bishop O'Regan, to compromise matters, gave them the Wabash Avenue property in exchange for that on the North Side. To this the Sisters consented, the location being more desirable for an Academy. He also gave them the site of the old frame church on the West Side, where they taught a parochial school for many years. Dr. Denis Dunn, the Vicar General, later, wanted this; so, after some negotiation, he deeded to them two unoccupied lots adjoining St. Xaviers, resuming control of the West Side lot. During these different transactions, Mother Francis, by her wise counsels, assisted in keeping the community property safe. When she left Chicago to come to Iowa, the Wabash Avenue property was valued at two thousand dollars per foot.

The condition of the Orphan Asylum was again commented on with asperity. It was full of children. There was no fixed revenue for their support. The Sisters exerted all their energies to keep it open—how they did it was to themselves a matter of surprise. In fact, but for the generosity of a few benevolent individuals, it would have been closed. They could not turn the waifs, adrift, however, so worked on, hoping for better times.

Despairing of assistance, Mother Francis contemplated building an asylum, in the near future, with the convent funds; as it was well-nigh impossible to live longer in the dilapidated house, where both Sisters and Orphans were huddled together, comfortless and non-sanitary. When either got sick, as frequently happened under the circumstances, there was not a spare room to put them in for care.

The Fairs having been only a nominal source of revenue, this state of things had lasted for a long term of years, and no better solution of the difficulty was given than ungenerous commentary. Mother Francis bore it in silence, earnestly entreating the Sisters to continue doing their duty until God saw fit to help them. And that time came, though differently from what she had expected.

It is well, the Redeemer of the world, proved in His own Divine Person, that our best intentions, and fairest actions, are sometimes misapprehended, prejudged, and condemned. During the heats of twenty

summers, and the snows of twenty winters, she had cared for the Orphans, and supported them under very adverse circumstances. It was asserted, perhaps without reflection, that she might have done more for them,

Never had a religious woman treated Orphans with more unselfish solicitude than she did. And not only the Orphans, but the worthless parents of many an outcast child, found temporary shelter in the poor asylum, until they could be brought to a better frame of mind than dissipation had plunged them into.

More than once, the venerable pastor of St. John's Church, Rev. John Waldron, was seen bringing an inebriate father and mother, followed by their half-naked, hungry little ones, to Mother Francis, with the introductory remark:

"Here they are again, Mother Francis! For God's sake, let them stay in the asylum for a week. If you do not, I must take them to the Armory, where they will be known as my parishioners. I am disgraced enough by them without that. It's the third time, I know. But what can I do?"

With a serio-comic look at the well-known delinquents, Mother Francis would say, with a pang at her heart, because she had no means of supporting such people, nor room for them, except in the hallways of the asylum—which they occupied too frequently—"Oh! yes, Father, they can stay, although we have two such families on our hands, at pres-

ent, similarly recommended. The Armory might be a more effectual place of penance for them, undesirable as it is. But, they are welcome to the shelter of the asylum for a week."

"Do you hear what Mother Francis says, you misguided creatures? It is to the armory I ought to bring you, not here. I declare, I never noticed Mary had a black eye until this moment. Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Mike? Thanks, Mother Francis, God bless you!" And to the asylum they went, while the good Father hurried away to provide for other delinquents.

Rev. John Waldron was always a devoted friend to the Sisters of Mercy, who taught his parochial school when it was in a quite primitive condition, and continued to teach it, when, thanks to his untiring energy, it became one of the most imposing edifices in the city, attended by more than a thousand pupils. He knew what a drain the Orphan Asylum had been on the Sisters, and expressed regret, publicly and privately, that they had not been more generously dealt with in regard to it.

Naturally, matters culminated. Rt. Rev. Bishop Duggan, hearing the remarks made about the asylum, decided to place it in control of a board of lay directors, the Sisters to work according to their instructions. To this arrangement Mother Francis would not agree, anticipating that a clash of opinions and other differences would be the result of a dual management.

The Bishop then offered the property for sale, as the Sisters had no deed of it, and in two days a purchaser was found, who required immediate possession. During this interval he further decided to use the new building, known as The University of St. Mary of the Lakes, for an orphanage, placing it in the hands of a St. Louis community, who assumed charge in 1866, and removed the orphans from the old asylum there, shortly after their arrival in the city.

The change gave intense sorrow to Mother Francis and the Sisters. However, as Bishop Duggan's mental condition could be no longer doubted, it was deemed advisable not to remonstrate, and the proceeding was submitted to in silence. After that the Bishop failed rapidly, until reason fled, This change necessitated another—the removal of the hospital patients, which may be briefly adverted to.

There was not an available spot to take them to, yet they had to be removed in two days. Repressing her tears—for she wept at losing the orphans—Mother Francis acted quickly. The boarders from St. Agatha's, numbering sixty-five, were brought to St. Xavier's Academy on Wabash avenue, although a large number of other pupils were in daily attendance, scant accommodations being given to either Sisters or boarders. Compelled as she was to revolutionize the existing order of things, she could do no better.

Several vehicles, principally express wagons, were hired to remove to St. Agatha's Seminary, the same day that the pupils left it, the sick, the blind, the lame, the bed-ridden old people, deserted and cast out by their friends, and long known as "The Sisters' Pensioners," for whom little or no remuneration was received. At all times the hospital was a refuge for these senile unfortunates.

Some had to be placed on stretchers; others propped up with pillows in the wagons. Three were dying—two women and a man. These Mother Francis would not permit the hired people to touch. Assisted by the Sisters, she helped to carry them out of the old hospital, placed them safely in the wagons, repeating the prayers for the dying as she did so, lest they should pass away in the act of removal. Bedding, furniture, everything that the Sisters had purchased was taken away, and the summer sun looked down in splendor on the mournful scene.

It was a broiling July day, and the wagons, with their living freight of suffering humanity, at last reached St. Agatha's, which was thenceforth known as Mercy Hospital. The building was in good condition, being recently erected, but is completely eclipsed by the magnificent edifice that stands beside it to-day, dedicated in 1870, by Rt. Rev. Bishop Foley, of pious memory. The Mercy Hospital, once St. Agatha's Academy, is now used for other charitable purposes.

Neither Rev. Mother Agatha nor Rev. Mother Francis lived to see the marvelous structure, for the existence of which their united genius and foresight gave a *raison d'être*. On the southwest corner of the block, the ground having been leased to them by the Sisters without rental, the doctors, under the leadership of Dr. N. S. Davis, built the Chicago Medical College in 1869. It has attained a continental reputation, and has materially added to the prosperity of the hospital. An addition, to be one hundred and eighty feet long, five stories in height, costing one hundred thousand dollars, is at present in process of erection.

Getting the patients into the new hospital was a more difficult task than getting them out of the old one. They were prostrated by the jarring and the jolting. Mother Francis, who had not partaken of food that day, saw them safely placed, carried a dying girl to her room without assistance, had dinner prepared for the exhausted Sisters who helped to do the moving, and then went out into the alley to recite her rosary. She had "meat to eat they knew not of."

Her self-control was a matter of surprise to those who heard of the transaction, as she asked no assistance from any one, and the double change was effected quietly in two short days. Noticing her absence from the refectory, a Sister who went in search of her was shocked by her appearance. Coif, guimp



and habit were wet with perspiration. Her face was purple, her eyes suffused with blood. Over-exertion, pent-up feelings and the heat had brought on an attack of vertigo.

Fortunately there was a tonic at an open window, which Sister compelled her to drink against her will. Without it she might have dropped dead. "Thank you, darling," she said when strength returned. "You have saved my life. I came out here alone, to ask God's holy Mother to help me bear my cross."

The change of institutions was now an accomplished fact, and the routine of business was again in working order for the Sisters of Mercy. But, Rev. Mother Francis long mourned for the orphans, as did the Sisters who had taken care of them. Bishop Duggan and she did not meet for one year after the change. When they did meet, not a word was spoken by either about the past.

He remarked to a mutual friend, privately, that she must be a saint. Her forbearance astounded him. To this day, in his secluded retreat, he will sometimes ask if Mother Francis is not coming to see him, to talk over certain matters.



## CHAPTER IX.

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THE WAR. BUILDING DEFERRED. FORT SUMTER. MISS NIGHTINGALE AND SISTERS OF MERCY. LINCOLN'S CALL FOR TROOPS. ANGELS OF THE BATTLE FIELD. SISTERS AS NURSES. ARCHBISHOP HUGHES' OFFER REFUSED.

ST. XAVIER'S Academy, used both for a day and boarding school, could illy accommodate both classes of students, numerically too large for it. To dispense with either department, however, was out of the question; so, Mother Francis arranged as best she could, in the hope that a wing could soon be built—or better, a new Academy. At this period, from a financial stand-point, St. Xavier's never had such an unbroken run of prosperity.

From 1861 to 1867, the daughters of many wealthy Southerners, whose homes had been destroyed during the conflict, were placed in Mother Francis' care. The daughters of prominent Unionists, also, who had broken up their establishments, uncertain what course events would take, were taken to St. Xavier's to avoid the tumult of war. Gold was at a premium, and gold flowed into the treasury.

Warm disputes on the slavery question, took place occasionally between these fair young girls, brought unexpectedly together from the extreme ends of the republic. The Southerners favored the keeping of slaves. The Northerners opposed it. Embittered feelings were aroused, which Mother Francis and the Sisters found it difficult to repress. But, eventually, the girls were induced to leave such matters to their elders, between whom God would declare for the right.

To return, however, Rev. Mother Francis was arranging plans for the new building, when the news of the fall of Fort Sumter flashed through the land. The plan, for the time, was necessarily abandoned. The citizens of Chicago were wild with excitement. The whole country flew to arms. War could no longer be averted. The Sisters of Mercy in their quiet convent, felt the shock as much as others.

Colonel Mulligan, a young Irish American of rare ability, true to the instincts of his race, organized the "Irish Brigade" for the defense of the Union, and had it in readiness to march in the summer of the same year. Before departing, he asked Mother Francis to send some Sisters with him to act as nurses. The men under his command being nearly all Catholics, as he was himself, he could not think of letting them encounter the dangers of the battlefield without the attendance of the Sisters. Mother Francis acceded, and Colonel Mulligan proceeded to

Lexington, Missouri, leaving Lieutenant Shanley behind, to conduct the Sisters to that point.

Naturally enthusiastic, Rev. Mother infused her own enthusiasm into the hearts of others. She spoke so eloquently of the need of religious nurses, that her words aroused the patriotism of the Sisters, and many volunteered for the perilous work.

In 1854, the Sisters of Mercy, from Ireland and England, assisted Florence Nightingale, and Mary Stanley, sister of the famous Dean Stanley, in hospital work during the Crimean War. The former philanthropic lady, finding it impossible to manage the English volunteer nurses, who flatly refused to cook, wash, or iron, or to do anything except administer medicine to the sick soldiers, who needed nourishment more than drugs, was delighted when the Sisters of Mercy arrived to help nurse those who were wounded unto death while preserving the honor of the British flag. The Sisters and Miss Nightingale were frequently associated in Hospital work. Miss Nightingale, however, received all the glory—the Sisters being left quietly in the shade.

The distinguished Mary Stanley was so edified by the patience, charity, self-denial, and other virtues, practiced by the Sisters in the Koulali Hospitals, of which she and a Miss Hutton had charge, that she not only gave entire control of the Hospitals to the Sisters, but, trampling under foot the prejudices of a life-time, became a Roman Catholic, openly, to the

great disgust of her brother, the eccentric Dean. The Sisters in Chicago remembered these things in 1861, and so did Mother Francis.

"Don't forget Florence Nightingale and the Sisters of Mercy on the shores of the Black Sea, seven or eight years ago, Mother Francis," said one of the nuns who did not volunteer for the war. "If you go South, you will win no more laurels than our Sisters did in the Crimea. Some Florence Nightingale will leave you to do the work, while she gets the credit of it."

The words though spoken in jest, moved Mother Francis to say: "The Sisters of Mercy, to-day, in America, whose peace is threatened by the internal dissensions of her children, are animated by the same spirit that sent our Irish and English Sisters to Scutari. Koulali, Balaklava, and other places. Do you understand that, my dear?"

"Yes, yes, I know," answered Sister, "That is true. But there is more to be thought of. There are two graves on a hill-top, visible from a certain point on the Black Sea, in which repose the mortal remains of two Sisters of Mercy, with no other watchers than the unspeakable Turk. How would it be if some of our volunteers died in the way and were buried in Confederate graves? I am a Unionist, remember."

"We will all be buried in Unionist graves," dear Sister," Mother Francis said prophetically. "The war in which we may be helpers, leaving the glory

to others, and keeping ourselves in the shade, will come out all right." And it did.

President Lincoln's call for troops met with a hearty response in Illinois; many of the brothers and husbands of St. Xavier's first pupils enlisting under the Stars and Stripes. Few of them, however, were allowed to depart before receiving the blessing of the former teacher of their sisters and wives—Rev. Mother Francis.

"God bless you," she would say to the brave men, equipped for war, who stood before her, not knowing whether they would ever see home or friends again. "God bless you. Do not return until you bring us peace. Then we will be proud of you. Remember, that love of country is akin to love of God." Her warm "God bless you," cheered many a heart that never after throbbed in Illinois, and these men, in particular, died heroes. The war went on with varying successes and reverses, until there was a general call for nurses. Woman's sympathy was aroused. Secular nurses, in special uniforms, wended their way to the South in bands and companies. Many of them did charitable, serviceable work. Many of them did not.

When the novelty of the thing was over they got tired of it. There was nothing particularly gratifying to human nature in obeying strangers, no better than themselves—they forgot the soldiers had to do it—in being deprived of rest for whole days and

nights together; in receiving no remuneration for hard toil—enthusiasm had not extinguished the love of the almighty dollar; in being obliged to attend the rank and file, as well as the stylish Commander. A large number of them became discouraged, and returned to their homes. Many honorable exceptions refused to return, and remained.

Fortunately for the soldiers the Sisters appeared upon the scene and were warmly welcomed. They did not tire of the laborious nursing. They did not work for pay, but for the love of God and suffering humanity. Most assuredly the Sisters' services during the war were forgotten when the laurels were distributed at its close. If President Lincoln had not been assassinated, it might have been otherwise, because he was just and generous, and had a preference for them.

Besides the Sisters, Sanitary Commissions, wearing badges and displaying diplomas, continued as nurses. But they did not labor as the Sisters did—had no desire to. In confirmation whereof, the following is quoted from the pen of a western journalist:

“ANGELS OF THE BATTLEFIELD.

“At the outbreak of the civil war in this land, Archbishop Hughes, of New York, tendered to the United States authorities the services of one hundred Sisters of Charity for the military hospitals. The generous offer was politely refused, and a whole com-

pany of young ladies from Boston, Philadelphia and other centers of culture and fashion assumed the red cross, and donned the serge habit of the Order of Patriotic Nurses.

“But the battle of Bull Run crowded the army ambulances, and town halls and private residences, as well as public buildings, were made to serve as hospitals. The cultured ladies soon tired of the work, or neglected the poor soldier in order to bestow all attention on the pretentious officer. However it happened, certain it is that President Lincoln telegraphed Archbishop Hughes to send on two hundred Sisters of Charity to the seat of war. And they were sent.

“After the fight at Antietam, Old Abe wrote personally to thank the Archbishop, and beg that His Grace would send, not only two hundred, but two thousand, if it were possible to find that many angels on the earth.”

As well as memory serves, the Sisters of Mercy from Chicago were among the first religious women who volunteered to act as nurses during the rebellion. Simultaneously with them appeared, also, the Sisters of Mercy from Baltimore, Maryland—the Sisters of Mercy from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—the Sisters of Charity (white cornets) of St. Vincent de Paul, from Maryland—the Sisters of Charity (Mother Seton’s) sent from New York by Archbishop Hughes—the Sisters of Holy Cross, from South

Bend, Indiana—giving to the nation a corps of Catholic Sisterhoods, who helped to alleviate the sufferings of the soldiers, whether Unionists or Secessionists.

After the rejection of Archbishop Hughes' offer, Mother Francis' great heart took the initiative. She organized a band of thirty secular women to assist the Sisters in the Southern hospitals, whither they were called by the soldiers of Illinois. Nor did she permit them to travel alone among the guerilla bands that were scouring the country, arousing terror wherever they passed. She accompanied them through the wilds of Missouri. They suffered no hardships she did not share. No ideas of personal discomfort, no fear of difficulties, could deter her when the peace of her adopted country was at stake.



## CHAPTER X.

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MR. LANTRY. A ST. LOUIS BOY. THE JEFFERSON  
WARDEN. BRECKINRIDGE—DOUGLAS HOSPITAL.  
FIRE IN CAMP. GENERAL FREMONT AND THE SISTERS  
OF MERCY.

SOME experiences of the Sisters will bear relating. Rev. Mother Francis was with the Sisters when they went to Missouri. As they were passing through the Streets of St. Louis, going from one depot to another, under the chaperonage of Mr. Lantry, of Chicago, appointed by Lieutenant Shanley to escort them safely through the crowds of sight-seers, they met with a somewhat impolite reception. Colonel James Mulligan, for the service of whose regiment the Sisters were engaged, was Mr. Lantry's step-son.

The St. Louis mob jeered at the Sisters' poke bonnets and long cloaks; made fun of the hoods worn by the secular nurses; and, in general, indulged in merriment at the expense of the travelers from Chicago. Mr. Lantry, whose position entirely pre-occupied him, paid no attention to their rudeness,

until a lad in the crowd exclaimed as Mother Francis passed him: "Oh, boys! it's goin to be a great war, sure as you're born. Here's the priesters."

Mr. Lantry, who kept close to Mother Francis, turned on him. "You young rascal!" he said savagely, "these are the Sisters of Mercy from Chicago, If you say another word about them, I'll break your head. Be careful what you say about priests, too. That's the name, it isn't priesters."

The boy collapsed; Mother Francis' face became scarlet; the Sisters tried hard to refrain from laughing; Mr. Lantry walked placidly on. Neither were any further remarks—complimentary or otherwise—uttered within his hearing. The party then proceeded to Jefferson, whence they expected to start for Lexington. The rebels, however, were massing in force along the river; so that, although an attempt was made to reach their destination, it had to be abandoned. The Sisters remained in Jefferson, in charge of the City Hospital, which was filled with sick and wounded soldiers, until the Spring of 1863.

The city authorities, hearing of the Sisters' disappointment at not being able to reach Lexington, turned it to their own advantage by requesting them to take charge of the Jefferson Military Hospital. General Fremont visited them there, and gave them liberal supplies for the sick. He was a typical, large-hearted American on all occasions, but especially during the war, in his relations with the soldiers.

The first night the Sisters were in the Jefferson City Hospital, in passing along the corridor that led to the apartments allotted to them, Rev. Mother Francis, who walked last, noticed at an open door a group of Hospital wardens staring at the Sisters in evident bewilderment. "Who are these outlandish looking people, any way?" remarked one of the men. "If they are coming to run this hospital, we don't want them. Guess we can get along without papists; and we will, too."

Rev. Mother being the only Chicagoan who distinctly caught his words, took the resolution to remain up for the night, weary though she was with long travel. The Sisters, and their assistants, retired early. She kept guard. The brutal treatment the Sisters received during the Philadelphia riots, the outrages perpetrated at the Charlestown convent, and other places, flashed through her mind. She did not undress. At midnight, a step sounded in the corridor, a knock was heard at the door. "Who is there?" she controlled herself to ask, slowly, sternly. "I am there," answered the unmistakeable voice of the warden. "Open, or it will be worse for you."

"I recognize your voice, and will report you to the proper officer in the morning, both for this ill-timed visit and your insolence this evening. We Sisters of Mercy have full control of this hospital," she said decisively, but without awakening the sleepers, who would have been alarmed had they heard her words.

The warden, making some unintelligible threat, turned on his heel and walked away. Rev. Mother was as good as her word, and reported the occurrence to the officer in command, who sent the fellow to other quarters. Thenceforth the Sisters were treated as deferentially as queens. In the chances of warfare the warden came again into contact with the Sisters of Mercy. He was shot by a skirmishing party, brought back to the hospital, and begged piteously for the Sisters to attend him.

Sister M. Alphonsus, who was left in charge when Rev. Mother Francis returned to Chicago, waited on him with unremitting charity; told him there was no hope for him, he must die; begged him to remember God and his soul. He had a hard name among his comrades. She learned from Mother Francis that he was the man who insulted her the night of their arrival in Jefferson. She learned from others that he was a rabid Irish Orangeman. Her prayers prevailed. Her charity was rewarded. The dying Orangeman acknowledged that, hating Catholics from his boyhood, he had purposely insulted the Sisters.

“Knowing now,” he said, “that you make no distinction of persons in waiting on the soldiers, whatever be their creed, I have changed my mind, and believe your faith must be the true one. Mine, which is the essence of hatred, certainly can not be.” He received baptism and the other sacraments, a few

hours before his death, and amply apologized for the annoyance he gave to Mother Francis.

This was not a solitary instance of changed opinions and conversions during the ministrations of the Sisters in the Southern hospitals. There were many such. Having been the first religious women ever seen in Jefferson, they were regarded with suspicion, both in the hospital and out of it, for a short time. Their devotion to the sick soldiers, however, added to the care they took of the dying, without regard to race or creed, soon won for them general confidence. The Jeffersonians became their staunchest friends when the jaundiced eyes of prejudice were opened to the light.

As Colonel Mulligan, although making a gallant resistance, was compelled to surrender Lexington to General Price, in September, 1861, the Jefferson City hospital was filled with wounded men—staunch Unionists and chivalrous Southerners—who thanked God that the Sisters were there to care for them. Rev. Mother Francis was obliged to return to Chicago; nevertheless, if circumstances permitted, she would willingly have remained in Jefferson to help the Sisters.

During the winter she sent them provisions, and heard of the good they were effecting through Mrs. Colonel Mulligan, who visited them with her husband, after his submission and parole, before returning to Chicago. Rev. Mother was moved to tears at

the recital of brave Colonel Mulligan's sufferings and thrilling adventures, as told by his accomplished wife, who shared them with him. Of himself or his military exploits the unassuming young officer did not speak, although the country was ringing with his praises.

Perhaps one of the most impressive services ever held in St. Mary's Church, Chicago, was the requiem mass for the repose of his soul. His remains rested on an elegantly draped catafalque before the altar, during the solemn ceremonies, at which Rev. Mother Francis and the Sisters assisted.

When the Sisters of Mercy from Baltimore, Maryland, took charge of the Washington, D. C. Hospital, which had been enlarged by opening communication between two fine mansions—one formerly owned by John C. Breckenridge, the distinguished U. S. Senator, the other by Stephen A. Douglas, antebellum candidate for the Presidency—there were often so many men to care for, that provisions ran short, and additional supplies were refused. It must be remembered, however, that the government at Washington had immense armies of men to provide for.

"The soldiers shall not want for food, if it is to be had for the asking," said the Sister in charge, during one of these emergencies. "I will go this moment to Secretary Stanton, and insist on sufficient food being sent to the Hospital."

The War Office not being far away, the Sister of Mercy soon appeared before the Secretary pleading for the soldiers. "Madam, I can not furnish more rations during the current month," Mr. Stanton said curtly. "Give each man less, and you can get along well enough with what you have." His attention having been previously called to the matter, by letter, ineffectually, she quietly asked: "Is that your final decision, Mr. Stanton? Because, if it is, I shall apply to the President. We will not let the soldiers suffer from hunger."

Without answering, Mr. Stanton turned to other callers, and Sister left to find the President, to whom the wants of the soldiers were again explained, together with Mr. Stanton's refusal to supply them. The President listened, and wrote:

"To all whom it may concern. On application of the Sisters of Mercy, in charge of the Military Hospital in Washington, furnish such provisions as they desire to purchase, and charge same to the War Department.———Abraham Lincoln." For which humane order, he received sincere thanks.

With this in her possession, the empty store-rooms were soon replenished, and the invalid veterans gave cheer after cheer for the great President, not forgetting their nurses. The Sisters of Mercy in Missouri, whether at Jefferson, or on the floating Hospital, had no occasion to complain of shortage of any kind, being abundantly provided with all things



necessary for the sufferers committed to their care; part of which was sent by Mother Francis from Chicago.

Once, a fire broke out in the long line of Camp Hospitals erected in the vicinity of Washington. The canvas tents were ablaze in a moment. The shrieks of the maimed occupants were pitiful. The Sisters of Charity, as well as the guards, carried out as many as they could from the burning enclosure, and two Sisters were found among the charred and blackened corpses on the morrow—true heroines of the Hospital Service. A Sister of Mercy from the Douglas-Breckenridge Hospital, seeing the flames, and hearing the shrieks, went to their assistance to help as she could. Her life, directly, or indirectly, was the forfeit of the efforts she made during that night of horrors, to save human beings from cremation.

At the beginning of the summer of 1862, the Federalists in Jefferson City received orders to join another division. This order closed the City Hospital, and the Sisters ignorant of the whereabouts of Colonel Mulligan, prepared to return to Chicago. They were met in the way by a Sanitary Commissioner, who induced them to take charge of a steam-boat Hospital, that was conveying to different points, where they could be properly cared for, the men who had fallen on the bloody field of Shiloh. Sister M. Alphonse, wrote to Mother Francis for permission



to accept the charge, and soon received it, although living on a steam-boat was to be a new experience. General Fremont was in command of the Western Department, hard fighting was taking place on the Mississippi. The confederates poured shot like hail-stones on the Federal gun-boats that swarmed in the river. Finding the Sisters on board of the "Empress," where soldiers were falling in quick succession during the cannonade, General Fremont held one of the Sisters before him, as a talesman and a shield. He believed her presence would ward off his death-blow. The dauntless Sister of Mercy, Sister M. Alphonsus, who had been Superior of the Jefferson Hospital, neither fainted nor fled, she only prayed; and who can tell whether her prayer did not save the life of the great General, who escaped unhurt.

He was the only man on the boat, at all events, who was not struck by a bullet. However it may be explained, the fact stands. Sister M. Alphonsus succumbed, after passing through a thousand perils, and sleeps in her silent grave in a Chicago cemetery to-day. General Fremont withstood the shock of battle. He always remembered with the kindest feelings the Sisters of Mercy whom he first met in Jefferson, and they so remembered him.

The surviving soldiers of the war did not forget what they owed to the Sisters, careful nursing, restored health, life, everything. The War Department did forget to recognize the Sisters' services.

Was it obliviousness of charitable help given to the country in the hour of her sorest need? Was it the spirit of intolerance? There exists One Who knows.

However, the soldier's fervent: "God bless the Sisters who nursed us in the war!" whenever they met them afterwards, in their homes, on the streets, in the hospitals, outweighed the Department's forgetfulness of woman's unselfish, unrequited toil.

## CHAPTER XI.

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THE SISTERS RETURN FROM THE WAR. COLONEL SWEET AND CAMP DOUGLAS. GENEROUS BUSINESS MEN OF CHICAGO. MOTHER FRANCIS VISITS THE CAMP. ADA SWEET. MILITARY SERENADES. A FALLING HOUSE KILLS MANY PERSONS.

THE Sisters continued to discharge hospital duty on the "Empress" until all the men of both armies, sick or wounded, were removed from Shiloh. Within the narrow confines of a steam-boat, it was no easy task to nurse the poor fellows, whose surroundings were far from agreeable. The Sisters did it by ignoring the surroundings; pretending not to see things that had better not be seen; paying no attention to language that had better not be heard—river men are not usually choice in their language. In other words, the Sisters kept aloof as much as possible, minding their own business, which was caring for the sick; and so gained an ascendancy over these rough spirits, that could not be gained by upbraiding them. In a few days they were treated with the greatest respect, and in their presence in-

decorus language ceased. Their stay on the "Empress" extended to many weeks.

Rev. Mother Francis could not hold frequent communication with the Sisters after they left Jefferson, on account of the disturbed state of the country; and fears for their safety caused her much anxiety. They came home to her at last, sick, and worn out from incessant toil. Sister M. Alphonsus never enjoyed good health after. The secular nurses were discharged to their great joy, as the war had no attraction for them, other than to help the Sisters.

In 1864, the long contemplated Academy was built. It was a splendid structure, fitted up with all modern improvements, and was filled with pupils as soon as opened. Among them were many young Hebrews belonging to some of the wealthiest families in Chicago. A prominent Rabbi became alarmed; visited the school-rooms of new St. Xavier's; noted the faces—many of them lovely ones—of the members of his synagogue with the intention of withdrawing them from the Academy; but changed his mind before concluding the visit, and suffered them to remain.

The Jews of Chicago were always warm friends of Rev. Mother Francis, and the Sisters who taught their children. They gave large patronage to Mercy Hospital, also, before their own Hospital was built. And not a few of their bankers declared that Mother Francis was as good a financier as any of them.

Seven years from the date of its erection, the beautiful Academy was a heap of smoldering ruins. It was one of the last buildings in Chicago to go down in the great fire. Mother Francis, however, did not see either the fire, or the ruin. She was then two years in Iowa.

During the greater part of this year, companies of Federal troops, shoeless, hatless, coatless very often; with squads of rebel prisoners, handcuffed singly, or in pairs, in the same destitute condition, were crowding into Chicago from the different depots, marching to Camp Douglas. All the glory and panoply of war had departed from these processions. The Sisters could not avoid seeing them, as the Academy was situated on Wabash Avenue, which led almost directly to the Camp.

Rev. Mother Francis' sympathies went out to the disabled men who had fought and bled for fatherland. Camp Douglas, in a southern suburb of the city, was then in charge of Colonel Sweet, of Wisconsin, and it leaked out that the men over whom he had control might be more humanely treated. It was reported there was no food in camp. Chicago has always been a cosmopolitan city, all shades of opinions—political and otherwise—all nationalities being represented there. During the rebellion, Southerners congregated in Chicago, enlisting sympathy. The under-current of feeling was strong. And, as invalid soldiers of both opposing armies were to be found in

Camp Douglas, a general indignation meeting was held, at which resolutions were passed that a committee of investigation be appointed to visit the camp, and see how matters stood.

When the committee appeared before the gate, Colonel Sweet refused them admission. To force an entrance, in spite of him, being out of the question, they withdrew, leaving their mission unfulfilled. But Americans would not allow Americans, whether by birth or adoption, to suffer for want of the necessities of life, which was said to be the case here. The disappointed committee men called upon Mother Francis to ask her to send Sisters to visit the camp. Two days before a large number of prisoners had been taken there.

"Colonel Sweet will not refuse to admit you, as he refused to admit us, Mother Francis," they said. "We only wish to know whether want really exists there or not; in order to relieve it, if it does."

It was an open secret that many sympathizers with the Confederates resided in Chicago, and Colonel Sweet may have had solid reasons for refusing to let men, of whom he had no knowledge, visit the camp. At one time, in fact, a few leading citizens, with their partizans, were arrested in Chicago and conveyed to places where they were kept under surveillance for expressing opinions adverse to the Northern cause too unguardedly. In a few instances, ammunitions for the South, found in private dwellings, were seized

by Colonel Sweet before they could be forwarded to intended points; which seizures lessened his popularity with the disaffected.

A general uprising between Federals and Secessionists, was feared in Chicago during the early part of Colonel Sweet's government of Camp Douglas; so that, for a moment, Mother Francis hesitated to accede to the request of the committee, who noticed her hesitancy, and urged her to make the visit. Remembering how kindly, even chivalrously, the Sisters were treated in the Southern Hospitals, she said at last: "We will do what you ask, gentlemen, and will try to succeed where you have failed. But, since there are hundreds of men in the camp, and supposing there is a shortage of food, how are we to help them?" The committee had thought of this, and appealed to the citizens for supplies. A couple of wagons laden with viands of every description soon appeared at the convent, with which generous supply, two other Sisters and herself proceeded to Camp Douglas.

It may be remarked, that the business men of Chicago are among the most liberal alms-givers of the world. Irrespective of creed or nationality, they are seldom asked for help, in vain. At the special seasons—Christmas, New Years, Easter—bankers, merchants, and traders generally, make it a point to remember the institutions that care for the poor—hospitals, asylums, all charities, Protestant and Cat-

holic alike. Nor are the bashful poor in their humble homes forgotten. Therefore, if the promise: "Not even a cup of cold water given in My Name, will go unrewarded," still holds true—and it does—may not the unprecedented prosperity of the men who control the commercial interests of the great city—to be known for all times as the site of the Columbian Exposition of 1893—be in part attributable to their generous alms-giving.

In the pioneer era, when squatters struggled to obtain a foot-hold in the vicinity of old Fort Dearborn, barter with the Indians constituted the "Board of Trade" for many years. But, when the golden harvests of the great North-West, assured to Chicago a place in the foremost marts of the world, her merchant princes did not forget "the hewers of wood, and drawers of water," who helped to build up her proud pre-eminence.

The sentry who answered the Sisters' call at Camp Douglas, declared, he had positive orders to refuse admission to Chicago visitors.

"We are the Sisters of Mercy, and would like to visit the sick soldiers, if Colonel Sweet permits," suggested Mother Francis.

"Sorry, Sisters, that you cannot enter," he replied. "You know military orders must be obeyed."

"I will see about it," said Mother Francis, quietly directing the man in whose carriage she was seated, to drive to the Mayor's office for redress.



Chicago's chief magistrate received the Sisters graciously; and, surprised at Colonel Sweet's action, wrote him, that, under the circumstances, it would be politic, and silence unfavorable reports, if he admitted the Sisters. When Mother Francis returned with the Mayor's request, she was unhesitatingly admitted to the wards where hundreds of men evidently nearing the end, lay moaning on beds of pain.

"You have been sent by the committee, no doubt, Mother Francis," remarked Colonel Sweet, who so far relented as to usher the Sisters into the wards, "if so, I frankly acknowledge that the constant additions to our numbers, have reduced our commissariat to a minimum; a fact, that, so far as I am concerned, has been injudiciously commented upon. Not being a miracle-worker, I have to make the best of circumstances."

"For the present, Colonel Sweet," answered Mother Francis, "we bring a small supply to your Commissariat; and will be thankful if you allow us to distribute it ourselves."

"With pleasure," returned the Colonel, "you have entire liberty to fulfill your mission of charity during the next two hours, at the end of which time, you will please consider the visit closed. For reasons that need not be given to ladies, we must guard Camp Douglas well."

Mother Francis had a severe fall in crossing the ice-covered entrance to the camp, and was suffering

from it; therefore, she at once turned to the sick men, who greedily devoured the food given them. "Thanks. God bless you. Sisters!" said many a poor fellow, who spoke no more in this world.

Colonel Sweet had placed his daughter, Ada, in St. Xavier's Academy a short time before. Afterwards, Ada Sweet became the celebrated Pension Agent of Chicago, who was superseded in her office by Mrs. Colonel Mulligan; and was at the time referred to, an unusually bright, intelligent girl. Neither was her father found seriously to blame in the Camp Douglas affair, as the committee acknowledged, after the sisters' visit.

Noticing that the shadows of death were setting on the features of several Catholic Soldiers, Mother Francis begged the Colonel to allow a priest from the city to attend them—a request that was graciously accorded—and so the rites of the church were administered for the last time, that night, to many a man who would otherwise have gone unshrived before God. A youth of eighteen, from one of the eastern States, cried like a child when Mother Francis laid her hand on his clammy brow. "Oh, God! Oh, God! I thought you were my mother," he murmured, closing his eyes in death.

Loth to depart, and promising to return the next day, Mother Francis left. But the next day, for most of those then lodged in Camp Douglas, was their first day in eternity! Mother Francis' visit soothed all parties.

To atone for refusing to admit the Sisters, Colonel Sweet sent a military band to serenade the Academy for several successive moon-light nights. The pupils, among who was Ada Sweet, were delighted with the music; Mother Francis was astounded when the martial strains sounded in such close proximity—the band formed a cordon around the building—Wabash Avenue was thronged with pleased listeners; and Colonel Sweet was satisfied with his atonement.

Just as the melody of the last serenade died away, an unfinished, five-story brick building, put up on State Street, in the rear of the convent, without proper supports, fell with a tremendous crash. The smaller houses on either side were leveled with the ground. Five persons, among them a young mother and her babe, were killed.

The City-Hall bell was silent, because no fire-alarm had been sounded, in consequence of which help came slowly. To arouse the neighborhood, Mother Francis and a few of the Sisters went out on the convent roof ringing hand-bells, and only then did way-farers returning to their homes, learn that a great calamity had happened.

An Italian who plied his trade in one of the demolished houses, called at the convent next morning, although suffering acutely from internal injuries, to implore the Sisters to find the bodies of his wife and child, both having been removed during the night. He spoke imperfect English, but Rev. Mother under-

standing what he wanted, dispatched two Sisters to find the missing dead. His wife's sister, taken unconscious from the ruins, also suffered severe injuries.

After a four hours search, the bodies were discovered in a box in an undertakers basement swimming in blood, with the other almost unrecognizable corpses. Both were placed in the same coffin, awaiting the arrival of the Italian who was profuse in his thanks. "We are Catholics, Sister," he said. "I would never have forgiven myself if they were not buried in consecrated ground. I will pray for you and your Rev. Mother, as long as I live."

The remains were taken to Calvary Cemetery unaccompanied by relatives, as the Italian had a hemorrhage on the street, mingled with the sand and lime he had swallowed when the building fell. For more than a week the Sisters waited on him in a doctor's office, whither he was removed from the undertaker's. His sister-in-law was cared for by the Sisters in the same place, and under the same circumstances. Instant death, the doctor said, would be the result of removing them to Mercy Hospital, or any where else. (Each evening the Sisters returned to the convent.) They recovered, contrary to expectation, and Rev. Mother, who had written the first wife's epitaph, was visited by them before they united their fortunes for life, to express gratitude for her kindness, and to ask her blessing on their future.

## CHAPTER XII.

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THE O'CONNOR DON. ST. XAVIER'S FIRST MISSION,  
GALENA, ILLINOIS. CONVENT PUPILS. THE GUID-  
ING SPIRIT.

**A**MONG the notabilities who visited the new Academy, was the O'Connor Don, one of the conservative, landed aristocrats of Ireland. Right Rev. Bishop Duggan accompanied him. He expressed himself much pleased, not only with Chicago in general, but with St. Xavier's in particular. The United States charmed him. A pupil, Miss Haines, sang one of the lays of his native land so artistically, so pathetically, that the aristocratic Irishman said in surprise:

"Until this moment, I believed that Moore's songs could not be rendered except in Ireland, as he intended them. I find I was mistaken. Rev. Mother, you have reason to be proud of your pupils." Rev. Mother assured him that she was not a musician, and that the credit of the training belonged to another. Sister M. Camillus was the music teacher, the singer,

her pupil. Bishop Duggan added: "In this greater Ireland beyond the seas, the melodies of the immortal bard are neither forgotten nor neglected. The performance just listened to, is proof." O'Connor Don's visit, redolent of the Green Isle, was a pleasant one in every respect.

One evening a carriage drove to the Academy, having for its occupant a mother in despair. She rang for admission, and asked to see her daughter, a lovely girl of fourteen, a boarder. "I must see her right here in the hall," she exclaimed, bursting into a flood of tears. Mother Francis brought the young lady herself. "Oh Mother Francis," cried the unhappy woman. "My husband is suing for divorce. We are living miserably. I am a Catholic, as you know. He is an infidel. He wants to take my child, but he shall not have her. He is following me in another carriage. Say what you please when he comes—my darling and I leave Chicago to-night."

She caught the girl by the arm, rushed out of the house, got into the carriage, and they were off. Rev. Mother knew of the infelicity of the pair, but was not prepared for this termination. Scarcely had she recovered from her surprise, when the pursuing gentleman also entered to demand his daughter. To gain time for the fugitives, Mother Francis begged him to be seated, and explain the cause of his demand.

In a white heat of fury, trembling violently, he sat down to calm himself. Rev. Mother seized the oppor-

tunity to remonstrate, and worked so effectually on his better feelings, that he promised to drop the divorce suit; secure a handsome competence to his wife and child; and, with her as mediatrix, await their return. In case they did not return, to let them live in peace, which was what eventually happened. The girl was soon after sent back to school by her mother. Before leaving, he said to Mother Francis, "my experience has set me against mixed marriages. I was determined this child should not be of my wife's faith. I am beaten, and broken-hearted."

At the close of the war, a Mr. T., son of a southern planter, who had settled in Michigan when the slaves were emancipated, brought his daughter to Chicago to place her in St. Xavier's Academy. He was a successful miner, carrying with him to Golden City, Colorado, the most approved apparatus for washing gold. His sister, Miss C., accompanied him, but suddenly changed her mind, after arrangements for his daughter were completed.

"Brother," she said quietly, "I do not want to go to Colorado now. I will stay with my niece, if you please. I desire to study." This slightly up-set Mr. T's. plans, but he did not oppose her, and she remained in St. Xavier's. Miss C., a recent convert to Catholicity, had the happiness of bringing about the conversion of her niece, and her two youngest nephews, sons of Mr. T., whom he had just left at



the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, unconscious of their change of creed.

An old negro slave, happy in her captivity with a kind master, came with the family to Michigan, renouncing her own people, and helped Miss C. to keep the conversions secret, until a fitting time for making them known to her brother presented itself. The opportunity was—before he left Chicago. She feared to make the avowal, but all fear fled at his gracious words: “Dear Sister, I did not expect this. However, since you and my children have become Catholics, you will be none the less dear to me. Of my own will, I brought Mary and the boys to Catholic schools; with my own will, I leave you in one, believing I can do no better.”

Transported with joy at the success of her zealous enterprise, Miss C. thanked him for his liberalism, and began her studies. She was gentle and reserved, yet in her desk in the school-room, were soon found wonderfully correct portraits of the pupils and the Sisters, on loose sheets of paper. They were shown to Mother Francis who was surprised at their life-like truthfulness. Being asked where she learned to sketch so well, Miss C. said she had received no instruction in drawing or portraits. “It has always been in my mind, nevertheless,” she added timidly. “I make pictures of everything. I think I could learn, and would like to try.” Rev. Mother, seeing the stamp of genius in her pencilings, had her



instructed by an artist, who soon declared he had nothing to teach her in the line of mechanical drawing, as she was born an artist. An oil painting of Catherine McAuley, Foundress of the Order of Mercy, was her first production under the direction of this gentleman. It did not please her, although it pleased him so much, that he offered her a lucrative position in his studio.

She did not accept the offer, having resolved what her future life would be, the day she entered St. Xavier's. Her next attempt at oil painting was a *Curè D'Ars*. For this she received so many suggestions from persons unacquainted with the details of art, that the *Curè* did not appear as he appeared in life. Mr. Healy, the Chicago portrait painter, hearing of Miss C's talent, called at the convent to see her *Curè D'Ars*. To her utter dismay—and enlightenment—with one sweep of his brush, he effaced the head.

He then assisted her in producing a natural *Curè D'Ars*; continued for some time to give her gratuitous lessons in oil painting; and brought out effectively her latent genius. Miss C.—then, Sister M. P.—now, owes some of her success as a religious artist to Mr. Healy's valuable instructions. Her pupils have been very numerous; her studio, a source of large revenue to St. Xavier's Academy. Some opposition was given by relatives to her becoming a religious, but she heeded it not, preferring to obey the call of God.

Once, at recreation, Rev. Mother Francis detected Sister Mary P. making a sketch of her, in a way that Sister supposed would not be noticed. Although often solicited by the Sisters, Rev. Mother could never be induced to sit for her picture. In the evening she called Sister aside, to exact a promise that she would not make the attempt again; in fact, obliged her to make the promise, which Sister kept while Mother Francis lived.

After her death, Sister Mary P. was sent for by the Davenport Sisters of Mercy, to take the likeness of the holy departed, who could not then protest against it. Willingly, and lovingly, she reproduced the well-known features—no easy task when life was extinct—fearing, however, that she was committing an act of disobedience in violating her promise. “I suppose it is all right, now,” she said, “but Mother Francis never would have permitted it.”

The likeness was a very natural one. A few copies made from it, are to be found in other convents of the Order. Sister Mary P. has become a famous portrait painter, as she has always been an exemplary religious.

A Miss Mary A., whose parents were beginning to find her a very unmanageable young lady, believing in no religious creed themselves, at her repeated solicitations, allowed her to join a spiritualist society, which condescension gave them endless trouble. She saw visions, and dreamed dreams. They were never

sure what would happen next. In their perplexity, they placed her in Rev. Mother Francis' care, hoping she could control her.

The change did not please Mary. Mother Francis' ways were not her ways. Convent schools require, for the sake of regularity, that on Sundays, Protestants who do not object, remain in the chapel during mass with the Catholics. Miss A. did not object, and was present. She noted the ceremonies; observed the reverent faces around her; and determined to discover what it was the Catholics worshipped. Her opportunity came.

The Sister sacristan, after mass left the Tabernacle key on the altar, by mistake. Miss A. saw it, remained in the chapel unnoticed; and as soon as all had left, opened the Tabernacle door took a consecrated Host from the Ciborium, wrapped it in her veil, left the chapel stealthily, went to her dormitory, and for the first time in her life, fell down in a fit. Her screams and writhings were terrible. She had told her teacher, Sister M. S. that she intended to explore the chapel, but Sister paid no attention to her.

Rev. Mother and the Sisters gathered around her in dismay. The sacristan came in affrighted, to say, she found the Tabernacle door open, and the Ciborium uncovered, which might, perhaps, account for Miss A's condition. Her teacher was there, and remembered her threat. Miss A. was still acting like one possessed, when she suddenly became calm; acknow-

ledged what she had done; and begged for forgiveness. All present knelt-down to make atonement for the outrage. The Sacred Host was taken back to its place by a priest who happened to be in the house—an act of reparation was read.

“The spirits told me to do it,” Miss A. said hysterically. “I was mad, and I did it. But, after the torture I have undergone, I am done with the spirits. I think I shall become a Catholic.” Rev. Mother, who compassionated the wayward girl, told her, if she desired to become a Catholic, she must notify her parents, after which the Sisters would give her proper instructions. She had to be sent home, however, on account of failing health. By her express wish, Mother Francis corresponded with her parents on the subject, who assured her they would put no obstacle in the way, if their daughter wished to become a Catholic. As she died in a short time, it is to be hoped, she had the benefit of a baptism of desire at least.

St. Xavier's first branch-house was a failure. The pastor of a small parish, a short distance from the city, immediately after the Academy was opened, asked for sisters to teach his parochial school, and got them. Rev. Mother Agatha, did not reflect that a thinly settled suburb was hardly the place to open a school. In her zeal, she only saw souls to be won to God, and complied with the request.

She hoped, that as in Chicago, the non-Catholics

of the village would send their children, and so help the school, The rector of the solitary dissenting church attended to that. In season and out of season, he warned his people not to send their children to the Catholic shool, where they would be contaminated by popish influences. He was listened to, and obeyed. A continuance of petty annoyances from the fanatical portion of his flock, added to the fact, that the school did not pay expenses, induced the Sisters to ask Rev. Mother to take them home.

After first learning from the Rev. Pastor, that he, himself did not get sufficient support, she reluctantly decided to withdraw the Sisters, rather than get into debt. He could not give monetary assistance to the school, as he was obliged to use nearly every dollar he received to pay off the debt on his church; his people being mostly day-laborers and poor.

Mother Francis was directed to bring the Sisters home, There was no railroad, and they returned in wagons. One merry little Sister, who had been presented with a cow, declared she could not leave her cow behind. But how was she to take it with her? "Not in a wagon," remarked some one. "Yes," she said, "in a wagon, if there is no other way. I can walk."

Mother Francis came to her assistance by tying the cow to one of the wagons, and taking the road to Chicago, which they reached in the dusk of the evening. The cow, therefore, entered the future metropolis

unperceived, and proved a valuable addition to their limited amount of live-stock. The good Father bade them a friendly farewell, but invited no more Sisters to his village, which was soon absorbed in the growing city.

In 1848, the Illinois Central Railroad Company built the first road passing through Galena from Chicago. The year following, Bishop Quarter asked the Sisters to open a school in Galena, at that time a prominent mining center. The Chicago community was small, yet, in obedience to the Bishop, a colony of talented, though not experienced Sisters, was sent to Galena. Rev. Mother Agatha accompanied them to their new home. The school was no sooner opened, then the children of the best people of the town, Protestant and Catholic, entered, and things in general promised success. The new craze of spiritualism, however, was just then obtaining a foot-hold in Galena, hundreds of Non-Catholics, including some pupils at the convent, being initiated in its pretended mysteries.

During recreation hours, these young ladies held sèances on the sly; astonished the Sisters by table-rappings; held converse with the dead; and, when forbidden to practice their juggleries, left the school, and spoke disparagingly of their teachers. The departure had its effect. The school languished. Other local causes, also were unfavorable. Perhaps, if the Sisters had more experience in the ways of the world,

the difficulties would have been overcome. As it was, the home authorities contemplated the closing of the mission.

This was postponed for a time, as four novices were preparing for profession, in fact, were professed in Galena by Rev. Mother Agatha. Some of the older Sisters favored the idea of returning to Chicago. The younger members, received and professed there, expressed a desire to remain

The problem was solved when Mother Francis became Superior, one of her first official acts being the recall of the Sisters from Galena. In extreme cases, a principle of governing adopted by her, was to appear *not* to govern. Some dissatisfaction was felt at the withdrawal; but, as Rev. Mother paid no attention to it, it ceased. Several young ladies who attended the school in Galena, followed the Sisters to Chicago, to continue their studies under their direction.

Among these were two non-Catholics, Miss Haines and Miss Blake, both of whom became persons of note in the musical world. A Chicago student, Miss Hugg, was such a marked proficient in drawing, under the tutelage of one of the Galena Sisters, that her services in draughting were sought for by the best artists in the Opera House, when that famous art centre had attained celebrity. The pupils of St. Xavier's, in almost every branch of learning,

reflected honor on their Alma Mater, and were a credit to their teachers.

All through the years, Mother Francis, whether Assistant or Superior, guided, enlightened, urged the Sisters on to higher aims, for the glory of God, and the success of the Order of Mercy. Her influence for good, in the Queen City of the Lakes did not die with her.



## CHAPTER XIII.

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MOTHER FRANCIS' CONSERVATISM. MISSION IN OTTAWA  
A SUCCESS. ACADEMIC COMMENCEMENTS. DISTRI-  
BUTION OF PRIZES. VARIOUS INCIDENTS.

THE experiences recorded in the preceding chapter, gave Rev. Mother Francis a distaste for out-missions. Naturally conservative she preferred to concentrate the working powers at home. Several Superiors who had sent out missions to various points, with consent, or by request, of ecclesiastical authorities, blamed her for this, as there were many applicants for the services of the Sisters of Mercy in Illinois. She accepted the blame, but acted according to her judgment.

The city of Chicago, alone, she believed would require all the Sisters who would join the order for the next half-century, and in a certain sense she was right. To-day, the Sisters of Mercy, numbering more than two hundred, teach a large number of parochial schools, several academies, conduct with rare ability the magnificent Mercy Hospital, as well as a

House of Providence. The Mother House, situated at the corner of Twenty-ninth Street and Wabash Avenue, is a marvel of architectural beauty.

Mother Francis mentally foresaw these grand results, and labored for their realization—a few of the actual results she did not live to see. Notwithstanding her conservatism, she made an exception in favor of Ottawa, Illinois, whose zealous pastor, Rev. Dean Terry, made an urgent appeal for a colony of Sisters. As he would not take a refusal, Rev. M. Vincent McGirr granted his request favoring him with some of the most efficient members of the community. This foundation was sent out in 1857, in which year Mother Vincent ceased to be superior.

Rev. Mother Francis succeeding her in office, continued to take as much interest in the Ottawa convent as if she had founded it herself. It was sometimes referred to as—her first mission. Afterwards, with her consent, Ottawa became a parent house; which with its affiliations, has been blessed with singular success.

Sister M. Xavier McGirr was the first local Superior in Ottawa, and is buried there in a beautiful cemetery, beside her deceased parents. Her sister, Mother M. Vincent McGirr, also passed some years in the Ottawa House; but she always yearned for the old mother house in Chicago, where she was one of the first Sisters professed, and will there pass from earth to join "the community in heaven." Pre-emin-

ently, among the founders of the Ottawa Convent, stands the name of Rev. Mother M. Paula Healy. When still young, she was elected Mother Superior, a position she filled for several successive terms. By her tact, and affability, she won hosts of friends for the new establishment, some of whom gave substantial proofs of friendship, both in money and land.

Rev. Dean Terry, devoted all his energies to the advancement of the convent he helped to establish. His name will ever be held in grateful remembrance by the Ottawa Sisters of Mercy; as will also be the name of their constant friend, Rev. Mother Francis. An eminent clergyman, Rev. Father Kinsella, who left the Chicago diocese in Bishop Vendevelde's time, brother of Mother M. Euphrasia, bequeathed a sufficient sum of money to furnish the beautiful chapel of the convent.

St. John's Parochial School, was offered to Rev. Mother Francis, in 1863, by Rev. John Waldron, pastor of a large congregation in the heart of the city. The Sisters began their labors there immediately, in crowded school-rooms whose attendance never decreased, although the whistles of the steam-engines rushing constantly along the street, often drowned the voices of both the teachers and the pupils. But as long as Father Waldron did not mind it, the Sisters did not.

The school, with its zealous corps of instructors, societies of the Holy Angels, St. Joseph, St. Aloy-

sus, monthly reception of sacraments, Sodality of the Immaculate Conception, free library, gave sincere pleasure to Father Waldron. The people were delighted with it. The progress of the pupils was satisfactory. Mother Francis asked no remuneration for the Sisters' services. However, Father Waldron acted generously, proving himself on all occasions the friend of the Sisters of Mercy.

For many years they taught St. Patrick's Parochial School, on the West Side of Chicago, at the request of Very Rev. Denis Dunn, Vicar General of the diocese, walking daily there from the convent on Wabash Avenue, which was a considerable distance to travel. Madison Street bridge—a midway point—was "swung" every few hours to let boats pass on either side. The exhalations from the Chicago River were offensive in the extreme. If the Sisters were fortunate enough to get across the river before the bridge was opened, they reached St. Patrick's School on time. If they did not get across before the opening, they were obliged to stand on the street with hundreds of others until the river craft sailed by, and the bridge was again in place. Sometimes they happened to be on the bridge when the opening began, and there they remained, per force, in fair weather or foul, inhaling the river breezes, sheltering themselves as they could from the scorching rays of the sun, or shivering in wet clothes during a down-pour of rain. Then they were not on time, and the pupils had extended recreations.

Mother Francis had this experience occasionally. "Why don't they tunnel the river and let us walk under it," she said to her companion after one of these delays. "We have been a spectacle to angels and to men." Her thoughts were in advance of the time, but it entered into the brains of others, and the Chicago River was afterwards tunneled.

There were no street cars then in the city, which fact made it difficult to reach St. Patrick's School on foot. During the winter it was hard travel. One Sister lost a shoe in a snow-drift, A second had her feet frozen. A third, painting the school-room, with the aid of another Sister, fell off a step-ladder, striking on an open keg of paint, which she upset, splashing it all over her clothing. Fortunately, no bodily injuries were received. She was not in a condition to walk home after the accident, and a carriage had to be called late on a winter evening. The driver did not notice Sister's dripping robes until they reached Wabash Avenue, "Indeed, then, Sister," he said, "much as I respect you, I would not have taken you into the carriage if I knew this. The cover of the seat is spoiled. And who is to pay for it?" Sister apologized, but the apology was received with such bad grace, that two extra dollars were given him, besides his fare, and he drove off still grumbling.

Mother Vincent strained many a point to keep St. Patrick's School in good working order. After her, Mother Francis did the same. In the year that St.

John's School was opened. Rev. Dr. Dunn asked that the Sisters who taught in St. Patrick's, be allowed to reside there. There was no precedent at the time for such an arrangement, and Mother Francis refused; upon which Dr. Dunn invited another Order to take charge of the school. During the rebellion it was not easy for Mother Francis to meet emergencies. She had but lately returned from the seat of war, herself, and filled as she could the vacancies formerly held by her absent children. Therefore, St. Patrick's was relinquished without demur.

Until the period of the late civil strife, the Good Shepherd nuns had not appeared in Chicago. Their noble work of charity, however, was forestalled by Rev. Mother Francis. At the urgent solicitation of Dr. McMullen, afterwards first Bishop of Davenport, who saw the need of such an institution, she opened a house on Market Street, North Chicago, for the reception of erring women; got it into proper shape, and soon there were as many inmates as the Sisters could care for. This unpretentious refuge was opened in 1858.

Although Catherine McAuley, foundress of the institute, opened a similar establishment in Dublin long before; conducting homes for this class of females, has not been considered a distinctive work of the Sisters of Mercy. On the arrival of the Good Shepherd Nuns, Mother Francis resigned in their favor. One of their out-door members—Sister Mar-

tha—was a remarkable person in Chicago for many years.

Her soliciting was a main factor in raising the establishment, from very humble beginnings, to its present imposing proportions. Every business man knew Sister Martha, and was prepared for her visits. She always returned home laden with goods. Bishop Duggan once met her on State Street bridge, carrying in her arms a motley variety of articles.

Relating the incident, Bishop Duggan said to Mother Francis: "Yesterday, while crossing State Street bridge, I noticed Sister Martha and her bundles, and tried to avoid meeting her. She noticed me, too, went down on her knees, encumbered as she was, and asked my blessing."

"I hope you gave it, Bishop, although she might have waited for a more suitable place," remarked Mother Francis. "Gave it! Of course I did. She would not rise till I gave it," replied Bishop Duggan. "The people on the bridge saw the occurrence. But then every one knows Sister Martha, whom I regard as a very humble saint."

From 1850 to 1867, Mother Francis presided at the annual examination held both at St. Xaviers and St. Agatha's Academies, which were conducted by her, personally, or by competent Sisters in her presence. Rev. Mother Agatha, and Rev. Mother Vincent, during their respective terms of office, had so arranged. Awarding prizes was her especial pro-



vince—diplomas and graduate honors being usually conferred by the Bishop of the diocese.

On one of these occasions, Cardinal Wiseman's beautiful drama—"Fabiola," was presented. The caste was a strong one. The pupils, cultured and intelligent, were fairly equal to the parts assigned them. Nevertheless, there was some difficulty in finding a realistic representative of Sebastian, the martyr. For a young lady, the role was hazardous. Some tried, and failed, some tried and objected. A Miss D., to relieve Mother Francis' embarrassment, studied the character, and made it a success.

Should the eyes of this lady, moving in the first circles of Chicago society, scan these pages, she will doubtless remember Mother Francis' anxiety concerning "Fabiola;" and her own triumph in the death scene of St. Sebastian. A Miss L., also, a society lady of Chicago, was an actress in this unforgotten school-scene, which she helped to make brilliant by her perfect oratory. Two non-Catholic young ladies—sisters—from Milwaukee, reading "Fabiola" for the first time, assisted in the drama.

St. Agatha's commencement exercises had acquired such wide-spread celebrity, and were so numerously attended by friends of the pupils, and the public generally, that spacious halls, bowers of artistic beauty, were improvised on the campus, the fairest and most gifted of Chicago's daughters winning crowns and plaudits in them.



Mother Francis was the guiding spirit; and seldom erred in naming the graduates, some of whom subsequently held positions in art studios—in musical conservatories—in law offices as amanuenses—in wholesale houses as bookkeepers—in their own elegant homes as exemplary wives and mothers—or better still, as accomplished religious teachers in the school-rooms where they had themselves been taught.

St. Agatha's Seminary ceased to exist, when the change of the Orphan Asylum and Hospital had been effected; the pupils having been transferred to St. Xavier's on Wabash Avenue. This elegant structure was destroyed by the fire of 1871. The school was continued in a rented house near Douglas University, until the magnificent academy, corner of Twenty-ninth Street and Wabash Avenue, was built. The Elevated Railroad, however, in the rear has proved a detriment. As a matter of course, the reputation of this academy now exceeds the records of former years; but, the memory of its great originator, Mother Mary Francis de Sales, still challenges a rival. She was a host in herself. Her third term of office expired in 1867; yet she was always "the power behind the throne." The unusual success of the Order of Mercy in Chicago, was largely due to her zeal and energy. The majority of the senior members of the community knew and acknowledged this. It was under consideration to apply to Rome through Bishop Duggan, for her life appointment as

Superior; which would have been carried into effect if his mind had not become impaired.

With her splendid record as a religious, first, and a business woman after, she was permitted to take a rest. Not exactly a rest, either, as she had charge for a short time of the hospital her genius helped to establish—the famous Mercy Hospital of Chicago. Rev. Mother Scholastica succeeded her in office.

## CHAPTER XIV.

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MOTHER FRANCIS IN IOWA. THE INDEPENDENCE MISSION. JOURNEYINGS TO AND FRO. INCIDENTS. DR. M'MULLEN'S VISIT. CHICAGO FRIENDS IN THE WEST. INDEPENDENCE ON FIRE. MOTHER BORROMEO'S DEATH.

In 1867, Rev. James Scallon, of De Witt, Iowa, waited on Rev. Mother M. Scholastic Drum, in Chicago, to induce her to send Sisters of Mercy to De Witt. The Sisters of Charity, B. V. M. had been there, and left, because of poor accommodations and scant patronage. The frame convent was a shell. Rain poured through the roof. The wind rushed in at doors and windows. In winter the cold of the house was well-nigh unbearable.

Father Scallon did not conceal this. He only asked that the Sisters of Mercy would try to make it comfortable for school purposes. Mother M. Scholastica promised that a trial would be made, selected Sisters for the mission—appointing Rev. Mother M. Borromeo Johnson, Superior—and accompanied them to De Witt. She wanted to see by personal observa-

tion how matters stood. The prospect was so poor, that she regretted having brought the Sisters. They came to stay, however, and Mother Scholastica returned to Chicago.

Rt. Rev. Bishop Hennessy gave every encouragement to the Sisters. The State of Iowa formed but one diocese then. Within a year, the De Witt convent was remodelled, made habitable, and filled with pupils. Rev. Mother Borromeo succeeded beyond her hopes. In 1869, Rev. Father John Gosker of Independence, asked her to send Sisters there, a request Bishop Hennessy, approved of. A bright future was opening for the Sisters of Mercy in Iowa. Mother Borromeo saw it, and resolved to consult with mother Francis. In an unexpected way the Sisters were also asked to come to Davenport, before the Independence house was opened. This decided Mother Borromeo to visit mother Francis at once. In Chicago, a consultation was held by Rev. Mother Scholastica, Rev. Mother Borromeo, and Mother Francis, about the Iowa missions, which Mother Francis terminated, by offering to come to Iowa herself.

Bishop Duggan reluctantly consented to this, and the mission for Independence was placed in charge of Mother Francis. There were then in Iowa, seven professed choir Sisters, and two professed lay Sisters, all originally, members of the Chicago community, of which the Iowa convents were off-shoots. The rapi-

dity with which the Order of Mercy spread in Iowa, from 1867 to 1892, was remarkable. Convents, besides those in DeWitt, Davenport and Independence, were opened in quick succession, in Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City. Sisters of Mercy from St. Catherine's Convent, New York, opened a school at Fort Dodge. Sisters of Mercy from Minneapolis, Minnesota, opened a Hospital at Council Bluffs. Cedar Rapids sent affiliations to Dacorah, Grand Junction, Manchester, Marion. Davenport sent a colony to Dunlap. Dubuque, besides opening an Asylum for Insane a few miles from the city, sent affiliations to Sioux City and Clinton.

There are to-day, in Iowa, six Hospitals conducted by the Sisters of Mercy, and more than nine Academies, with parochial schools attached to each. Mother Francis' conservatism gave way at last. She was delighted with the spread of the Order, gave such assistance as was in her power to the young missions, rendered valuable service to Mother Borromeo while she lived. Of the nine Sisters who came from Chicago to Iowa, all have passed away, save two, Rev. Mother Baptist and another. The Mortal remains of Mother Francis, with those of five of her early companions in religion, repose in the cemetery of the Davenport convent, where numbers of other Sisters are also interred.

At Independence, Mother Francis although in her fifty-third year, taught a junior class of children and

made the visitation of the sick, walking over the prairie for miles to find them. An old man, a miser, lay dying in a wood shed attached to his son's house. The son declared it was impossible to keep him in the house on account of his offensive habits. The weather was warm, the shed was a good one, the seeming cruelty was explainable.

Mother Francis discovered him accidentally, while making her rounds. Hearing groans in the shed, she went in, and was shocked by what she saw. With unkempt hair, hands, face and feet unwashed for weeks, finger and toe-nails as long as birds claws, bed and bedding in the filthiest condition, the poor creature presented a pitiable appearance. He owned a farm, and hoarded the rent, nevertheless. An Irish Catholic, he had no thought of preparing for the eternity he was approaching.

Mother Francis attended to his bodily wants first. She sent the novice who accompanied her to the house, for soap, water and towels, and with her own hands performed the needed ablution. "Oh, Mother, how can you touch him?" exclaimed the novice. "How did Christ touch the lepers, dear," answered Mother Francis. "You will please to cut his finger and toe-nails."

The novice obeyed in fear and trembling. The transformed patient protested against their attentions. "I don't know who you are," he said. "But I know you wont wash me again." "We will get your

soul washed next," remarked Mother Francis. He looked at her earnestly. "I believe God sent you here," he replied. "I forgot I had a soul until you reminded me of it. Get a priest at once, because I know now I must die." She had his clothing washed, and next day Father Gosker gave him the last sacraments. He died the same week, reconciled to the church, giving evidence of sincere repentance. His money, however, perished with him, being concealed where it was not discovered at the time of his death, except a few dollars he gave to Father Gosker to say masses for the repose of his soul, and to bury him.

An Independence lawyer, Mr. Wert, happened to be out shooting game. His wife was a convert to Catholicity, he was a free-thinker. A random shot took effect in his right arm, producing instant paralysis, and blood-poisoning. He was carried home in the arms of strong men—dying. Mrs. Wert, a refined Boston lady, became suddenly gray with fright. Mother Francis hearing of the accident, went to the home of Mr. Wert, and waited on him for three days and nights, assisted by other Sisters.

"I must lose him, Mother Francis, I can see that," sobbed broken-hearted Mrs. Wert. "He was a good husband to me, and a kind father to our children. If he only died a Catholic, I would be reconciled to the will of God." The dying man, who had not yet lost the power of speech, heard her. "My

darling wife," he said, "I will die a Catholic. The charity of Mother Francis and the Sisters has obliterated the prejudices of my life."

Father Gosker was again called, and another soul was added to the Church Triumphant. As permission to remain out of the convent at night to nurse the wounded man was necessary, but could not be obtained in time, Mother Francis explained it to the proper authorities afterwards, who approved of it in a case of emergency.

To assist Rev. Mother Borromeo in the onerous business of the Davenport institution—which was two-fold, care of the sick and care of the insane—Mother Francis made frequent journeys between Independence and Davenport with much inconvenience to a person of her years. Returning once from Davenport during a blinding snow storm, the train unable to work its way through the drifts, came to a standstill three miles from town.

It was nearly midnight. The conductor told the passengers he could go no further; adding that whoever wanted to reach Independence must walk there. There was no help for it; so, Mother Francis and a young Sister, recently professed, started across the trackless fields—snow and sleet blowing in their faces. Guided by Providence, they reached the outskirts of the town, when Sister suddenly became benumbed, and fell; declaring she could not walk another step.



To leave her there even for a short time would be dangerous. Fortunately a wagon filled with passengers from the snowed-in train came in sight. Mother Francis begged the driver to take Sister along with the others. "She's in a bad fix," he said looking at her. "I cannot make room for two. What are you going to do?"

"I will get along all right, if you take Sister to the convent in Independence," she answered. "If I'm not mistaken, you are Mother Francis," returned the man, as he lifted Sister into the wagon. "Stay where you are. I will come back for you. Many a good deed you did yourself." The storm was so fierce he could not return, although he tried to.

As he drove off, Mother Francis, half frozen, uttered a prayer, and resumed her walk. She arrived at the convent as soon as Sister did, utterly exhausted; but arose in time for morning meditation, nevertheless. To make train connections, it was necessary to leave Independence about one o'clock in the morning; therefore she neither slept that night, the following day, nor the night of her return. These journeys were slowly undermining her constitution; but she did not mind, because the work of the Order was prospering in Iowa, and the Sisters looked to her for advice, as they had done in Chicago.

Independence was a thriving town, settled chiefly by Massachusetts people, to some of whom the Sisters were a curiosity. "There is the mother of them all,"

said a lady visitor to her friend, pointing to a postulant, who was passing along the hall of the convent. The postulant turned and smiled. "Guess your'e mistaken," answered the friend. "That's a young girl, she can't be their mother. But who are they in mourning for?"

The Academy and free school were well attended until a western emigration tide set in, and Independence lost some of its inhabitants, who went to Leadville, Colorado, and other points—not always bettering their condition. A new set of people took their places, and in a few years business was active as before. Just then, Rev. Dr. McMullen, of Chicago, paid Mother Francis a visit. He did not know he would visit Iowa a second time, as first Bishop of Davenport.

The school pleased him so much, that on his return to Chicago, he sent his niece to Independence, to pursue her studies under Mother Francis' direction. Other Chicago friends, also, came west to visit her—notably, Mr. Conley, hotel proprietor, with his wife and two daughters, one of whom, an accomplished girl, had been educated at St. Agatha's Seminary. This family suffered heavy losses during the fire of 1871. Rev. Dr. J. McMullen and others made heroic efforts to save some fine oil paintings, sent to Mr. Conley from Rome by clerical friends, with Mrs. Conley's jewel case—a small fortune in itself—by removing them to an open space in Dearborn Park.

In the morning not a trace of them could be found, the fire-fiend having swept the neighborhood during the night.

A miniature Chicago fire destroyed the greater part of Independence the following year. Like the greater fire it was said to be the work of incendiaries. The convent stood on a gentle slope; the town extended to the river from its base. The flames, the falling buildings, the useless efforts of the firemen were visible from the porch where the Sisters were assembled—not in fear, however, as the distance from the burned district was too great to admit of the fire reaching them.

Mother Francis lost control of herself, when the shrieks of women and children reached her. She rushed from the porch to go to their assistance, an act from which the Sisters, with difficulty, restrained her. There was neither loss of life, nor personal injury, but the destruction of property was considerable for a town of its size, and insurance companies were tied up after the Chicago conflagration. Nevertheless. Independence was soon rebuilt.

She seemed to take a new lease of life under the invigorating influences of the prairie breezes, if energy and activity were marks of it. The ravages of time were stealing on unfelt. Mother Borromeo failed after a surgical operation that did her no good. Her sufferings were agonizing until death came to her relief. Hers was a beautiful soul, that God purified

in the fire of affliction, before taking her to Himself. Mother Francis was almost inconsolable for her loss, they had labored together so many years. On the death of Rev. Mother Borromeo, Mother M. Baptist became Superior of the Davenport community, and looked to Mother Francis for guidance as her predecessor had done. Indeed, a large share of the good effected by this house, is traceable to her, even before she became its Superior.

It was of Mother M. Borromeo, that Mrs. Alexander Sullivan, of literary fame, wrote: "How beautiful a nun's life must be. I met to-day, in St. Xavier's Academy, a Sister of Mercy, whose face I shall not easily forget. White as a statuary angel's, placid, as one not swayed by human passions, the sanctity of God enveloped her like a garment."

## CHAPTER XV.

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THE NEW SEE OF DAVENPORT. RT. REV. BISHOP  
M'MULLEN. MOTHER FRANCIS SUPERIOR OF THE DAV-  
ENPORT CONVENT. THE CHOLERA A PECULIAR BE-  
QUEST. AN INSANE WOMAN. DEATH OF BISHOP  
M'MULLEN.

FROM 1837, when Rt. Rev. Mathias Loras, was the incumbent of the diocese, to 1881, the State of Iowa continued to be governed by one Bishop. During this long interval of forty-four years, the Catholics, at first few in number, became numerous. The spires of churches, surmounted by the cross, were visible everywhere. The territory to be governed, however, was too large. Iowa was admitted to statehood in 1846, from which period the progress of Catholicity was assured.

Rt. Rev. Clement Smith ascended the episcopal throne in the Cathedral of Dubuque, May 3, 1857, and died, September 22, 1865; having governed the diocese for eight years. He was succeeded by Rt. Rev. John Hennessy, in 1869. Fifteen years later, 1881, Iowa was divided into two dioceses—Dubuque

and Davenport—Rt. Rev. John McMullen being consecrated Bishop of the new see, July 25, 1881. Great rejoicings were made when Dr. McMullen of Chicago, at one time President of the University of St. Mary of the Lake, was raised to the prelacy. (In his humility, he deemed himself unworthy of the honor). The people of Chicago were pleased at his elevation, but regretted his loss. He had endeared himself to them in many ways. Immediately after the fire, he started on a soliciting tour through the United States and Canada, to collect funds to help rebuild the ruined city, and succeeded beyond his hopes.

The people of Davenport were happy to have him for their Bishop—Mother Francis in her secluded convent as much as others. A deputation from Chicago accompanied the Bishop on a special train to Davenport, where citizens of all shades of opinions turned out to bid him welcome. Congratulatory letters by hundreds were sent to him—perhaps one of the most heartfelt came from Independence.

Rev. Mother Baptist's second term of office expired during the first year of Bishop McMullen's administration; and he at once thought of calling to Davenport his old Chicago friend, Mother Francis. Bishop Hennessy and he arranged the transfer, and she obeyed his mandate, without knowing that he had proposed her name for the consideration of the Sisters at the election about to be held. She was filled

with consternation on hearing it. In the chapel, before the Bishop and the Sisters, when the result was made known, she declared her unworthiness, her incapacity, her failing health, her declining years, her determination to serve, not govern, for the remainder of her life. Independence, before the erection of the new diocese, had been a branch house connected with Davenport.

Bishop McMullen, wondering at her humility, saw her tears, but was not turned from his purpose. "Mother Francis," he said, "you have been elected Superior according to the formula of your rule. I give you three days to think the matter over, notwithstanding your protest. The experience of age is necessary here. At the end of that time we will reassemble, and come to a decision."

Mother Francis was silent, the three days expired, and they met as ordered. The Bishop, then, without giving her a chance to remonstrate, named her Superior. Yielding to the voice of authority, she submitted, and again took up the cross. Mother M. Baptist became her assistant, as she was, eventually, Mother Baptist's assistant. Bishop McMullen believed she would bring blessings to his diocese, as she had formerly brought blessings to the diocese of Chicago. He did not know that his days were numbered, and that she would be one of those who would weep beside his tomb. He sickened of a mortal illness after two short years of episcopal

duty, and she, as well as thousand of others, was left to mourn his loss.

With the consent of the Sisters of Mercy, and at the expense of the city of Davenport, the municipal authorities had erected on the hospital grounds, a building for the reception of persons suffering from epidemic diseases. It was soon in requisition for smallpox patients, as the dreaded scourge was raging in the city. To prevent the spread of contagion, the doctors requested Rev. Mother Francis to appoint Sisters who would not come into contact with others, to attend to them. She did so, appointing three, and stipulating that she, herself, assist them.

“No, Mother,” replied Dr. M., “we will not accept you. Your services are too valuable to the community. My confrères, myself and the Sisters will attend to the smallpox cases, and to nothing else, for the present. You are not to come inside the door, although the house is on your property.” Rev. Mother, in her charity for the stricken, still insisted on helping to nurse them, but was finally and positively refused. She went daily, however, to the gate of the enclosure, carrying the Sisters’ food, and bringing delicacies for the patients. It was hard to obey the doctors in this instance, but she conquered herself. For several weeks, the Sisters, isolated in the building with the putrid patients, nursed them day and night, washed and fed them, and when dead—for most of them died—put them into coffins with



their own hands. Mother Francis' great regret was that she could not help.

The smallpox at last disappeared, and strange to say the Sisters escaped unhurt. That the city council acted wisely in erecting this hospital on the Sisters' property can hardly be doubted. The idea may have originated in the following fact: Shortly after Mercy Hospital was opened in Davenport, cholera broke out. Business was paralyzed. The more prominent citizen's fled. Cholera tents, placed along the Iowa side of the Mississippi, were filled with helpless human beings.

The medical men of the city were at their wits end to find nurses that could with difficulty be found, so great was the fear of approaching the cholera patients. The great Davenport surgeon—Dr. Peck—suggested that the Sisters of Mercy be called to their aid; a call that was instantly responded to by Rev. Mother Borromeo and the Sisters. Dr. Peck, with other physicians, Mother Borromeo and her assistants accordingly took charge of the tents and their occupants; not once ceasing in their humanitarian efforts until the cholera germ was destroyed; and Davenport was declared to be again in a sanitary condition. It was remarked that neither doctors or nurses caught the disease. Dr. Peck and the Sisters of Mercy were co-laborers for more than twenty years, ministering to the sufferers of Iowa and adjacent states. He was one of the founders of the Medical

School and Clinical Hospital of Iowa State University, where his name will be long remembered. Dr. Peck died December 12, 1891, a special anniversary of the order with which he was so long and intimately connected.

Mother Francis urged Mother Borromeo to accept the proposal of the city—to build their hospital in connection with Mercy Hospital, and it stands there to-day ready for emergencies. Not Mother Borromeo, however, but Mother Francis, was the person destined to see its usefulness tested.

A Davenport lady, benevolently inclined, asked Bishop McMullen to which of the religious orders in the city she ought to donate her house and lot, requiring in return support for life. The Bishop referred her to the Sisters of Mercy, who accepted, in good faith, both the gift and the donor. A day school was opened in the house; the lady occupied reserved apartments, receiving due attention from the Sisters for many years. Afterward, repenting herself, she discovered, through interested parties, a technical flaw in the deed she had given to the Hospital. Mother Francis received notice that she must pay rent for the property, many times repaired by her during its occupancy, as she could no longer hold it legally.

She refused to pay rent, but, rather than lose all she had expended, offered to buy it at a price named by unbiased persons. This proposal preventing liti-

gation, the lady agreed to it. A price was named; the property was bought and paid for. The old frame house was immediately torn down, and a fine brick edifice erected in its stead. St. Mary's School, so called in honor of the Blessed Virgin, is an architectural addition to the city of Davenport, with its large statue of Our Lady of Victory standing conspicuously above the main entrance.

On one occasion, Mother Francis was officially notified to appear at the Davenport Court House, to answer to charges preferred against her by a female patient, recently discharged from the Insane Asylum under her care. The charges were cruelty, starvation, illegal detention, and things of the kind. The plaintiff was the only witness. As she had been sent from the State Asylum for Insane, at Mount Pleasant, to the Sisters' Asylum in Davenport, the charges were easily refuted by Mother Francis, without the aid of counsel.

Baffled, but not satisfied, her lawyer had the witness called to the stand a second time, when she became so violent, and incoherent in her language, that it was evident to the lookers-on, she was still an insane woman. Mother Francis seized the opportunity to ask: "Can an insane person's evidence be received in a court of justice?" His Honor, on the bench, answered: "No," and the case was dropped. By a certain class of people, this trial was looked forward to with interest, as being likely to expose

the iniquities of Catholic management. It failed ignominiously.

Mount Pleasant Hospital was constantly sending "incurables" to Davenport, having no room for this class of patients. Every nook and corner in the Sisters' Asylum was filled with them. As a matter of charity, therefore, as much as of necessity, Mother Francis built, for their accommodation, an asylum in the rear of the Hospital, capable of containing 300 beds, representing as many patients. Financially, this was no strain on her, because, although remuneration, individually, was small, collectively, when their number ran up into the hundreds, it amounted to a respectable sum. Scott County, of which Davenport is the county seat, has always acted liberally with the Sisters of Mercy. Nor has the county lost by it. On the contrary, the Board of Supervisors acknowledge they have been well served, and their insane well cared for.

In 1882, Bishop McMullen showed signs of failing health, to the great sorrow of his people who had learned to love him. His simple, unassuming manners endeared him to his priests, to whom he had been, until recently, a comparative stranger. Words could not express the sorrow caused by the news of his fatal illness. He was one of those rare characters who forget themselves for others. Even when the hand of death lay heavy on him, he did not complain.

Dr. Peck, admiring him as a man, though not of his faith, used every means known to medical science to give him relief, without avail. Mother Francis, or Sisters sent by her, visited him daily, but dared not let him see their grief. He knew the end had come, and was prepared for it. His lips moved constantly in prayer. The privileged few admitted to his presence while he was confined to his room, suffering untold agony, marvelled at his patience.

The Sisters of Mercy, whom he regarded as the dearest portion of his flock, attended him to the last. On July 4th, 1883, he calmly yielded up his spirit to Him who gave it, mourned for by the entire diocese. Although expecting it, Mother Francis was prostrated by his death. The grave was ever opening to receive those she loved. When his body was brought to the church, crowds gathered around the coffin to take a last look at Davenport's dead prelate, testifying, by tears, how deep was the sense of their bereavement. Rt. Rev. John McMullen was laid to rest under the altar of St. Margaret's Cathedral.

## CHAPTER XVI.

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RT. REV. BISHOP COSGROVE, CONSECRATION AT CATHEDRAL. REV. MOTHER M. BAPTIST. MOTHER FRANCIS, ASSISTANT. LAST ILLNESS. DEATH OF MOTHER FRANCIS. A MARTYR'S BODY. FUNERAL SERVICES.

FROM the date of Bishop McMullen's death, until September 14, 1884, the See of Davenport remained vacant. Much speculation regarding his successor was indulged in. When Rome spoke the speculation ceased. A worthy successor to the deceased prelate was found in Rev. Hanry Cosgrove, for many years pastor of St. Margaret's Church, Davenport, before it became a cathedral.

Iowa, one of the youngest States in the Union, had the unique honor of giving to the Church a Bishop who was to remain within its boundaries. The nomination gave universal satisfaction. Father Cosgrove was one of Iowa's most venerated priests. The ceremonies of his consecration were carried out with great splendor, Archbishop Feehan, of Chicago, Archbishop Ireland, of St. Paul, Bishop, now Archbishop, Hennessy, of Dubuque, with other high

ecclesiastical dignitaries, being present on the occasion. The priests of the diocese completely filled the sanctuary.

Rt. Rev. Henry Cosgrove was the sixth Bishop with whom Rev. Mother Francis had spiritual and business relations during her religious life. The Sisters were given a holiday, and all who could be spared attended the consecration. Mercy Hospital, Davenport, and its annex, St. Mary's School, were favored with early visits from the Rt. Rev. Bishop, who was especially pleased with the magnitude of the work done in the hospital.

Rev. Mother Francis' second term of office in Davenport closed in 1887, when Rev. Mother Baptist, who had been Superior before, again resumed the charge. She selected Mother Francis for her Assistant, a position she retained until her death the following year. Occasionally, Mother Francis came into contact with persons who had but slight knowledge of asceticism, and these could neither appreciate nor understand the greatness of her character. Religious are prone to judge hypercritically of each other, Father Faber says.

It is supposed her death was hastened by exposure while superintending the erection of St. Mary's School. She never spared herself, at all events. At the close of November, 1888, she suffered from an affection of the heart, which confined her to her bed for the first time in many years. A strange feeling



of loneliness, never before experienced, took possession of her, but soon passed away.

Although in her seventy-second year, she was strong and vigorous until this attack, and no apprehension of its fatal ending was felt. Not for a moment was the clearness of her intellect clouded. Short of stature, and growing fleshy with advancing years, it was often predicted that she would die of apoplexy. Mother Francis did not so die. She died in the full possession of her faculties—conscious of the act of dying—longing to be with Him she had well served. Her perfect calmness and self-possession prevented the sisters from realizing that they were about to lose her, until some one noticed a sudden change in her features, and only then was she anointed, after receiving the Holy Viaticum.

It is hardly possible to witness, unmoved, the solemn ceremony of administering Extreme Unction. The thin veil that separates time from eternity, drawn aside by invisible hands before the eyes of the dying, almost reveals the Great Beyond at that supreme moment, making the spectators long to pass the boundary then, that must be passed sooner or later. There were those present during Mother Francis' gentle agony, who would have fain gone with her. After being anointed she sank rapidly.

The Sisters wept aloud. "Dear Sisters," murmured the dying nun, "do not let me see tears. It will break my heart. Let me pass quietly to my



God." And she was gone. The great, heroic soul of Mother Francis de Sales—without a struggle—went forth to meet its Creator.

A radiant smile settled on her countenance. She has seen Jesus, and was welcomed by Him. Her toils, her labors, her crosses, were ended at last. The day previous, she arose to hear mass, put failed in the attempt. A few of the old Sisters who began convent life with her in Chicago, witnessed her holy death. Others who knew her in later years, were present, also. But the love of the former for their dead mother, surpassed the love of the latter, who knew not the wonders she had wrought, who knew not her faithful, loyal heart.

It was the blessed privilege of those who prepared her body for interment, to look upon the body of a martyr. The leg injured in early life by erysipelas, was found to be shortened, shriveled, deeply indented by the insidious disease. Yet she walked on it during a long and busy career, incessantly.

Decayed splinters of her right jaw-bone, broken by a Chicago dentist while extracting a tooth, had pierced through the flesh in many places, forcing their way out, causing incredible pain, which she bore for more than twenty years without complaint. Dr. N. S. Davis feared, but proposed an operation, to which she would not consent. The scars left small cavities in her neck, that caused a slight depression of the mouth at that side of her face.

The use of the cilice was familiar to her. A Sister who occupied the same call with Mother Francis, once heard her moaning in the night. Fearing she had an attack of apoplexy, she arose, to find, on loosening her clothing, the iron chain encircling her body, imbedded in the flesh. Horror-stricken, because unused to such a mode of penance, herself, she took off the chain, thereby awakening holy, mortified Mother Francis. "Dear Sister," she said, in extreme confusion. "I am sorry you discovered this. It seems as if God will not accept my penance, since He permits it to be known. Please, do not mention it to any one, and give me back my chain. You do not know how much I need it."

The cilice, whose marks were visible on her blessed body after death, was not returned. Hastening on a certain occasion to perform an obedience given by her Superior, she fell down stairs, striking on a calling-bell, the handle of which was forced into her hip fully an inch. She arose as if nothing had happened, proceeded on foot to the convent on Wabash Avenue, whither she was summoned, tracking the sidewalk with her blood, and fainted when she entered the house. The Sister who accompanied her only then knew of the accident.

This wound, dressed only by herself, never properly healed, and appeared in all its ghastliness, when she no longer had the power to conceal it. Thus have the saints ever acted, for love of Jesus, crucified.

It is simple truth to record these things, because they revealed themselves like an open book to the astonished Sisters who beheld them. "How could she possibly have continued laboring in the functions of the Institute," they asked themselves. To which question no other answer can be given, than, that, with the help of God, she did so continue to labor until a few days before her happy death. The rigor with which she treated her body was not suspected until then, although many knew of her extreme mortifications. It was a subject of edification, as well as of wonder, reminding one of the macerations read of in the lives of the Fathers of the desert. Her bodily condition made others reflect, that, if they could not imitate her penances, they ought at least bear pain patiently.

The funeral services were held in the convent chapel, three days after her decease. Rt. Rev. Bishop Cosgrove officiated in the solemn requiem mass, assisted by Rev. Father Flannery, of Davenport, and Rev. Fr. Greves, of Moline, Illinois. Revs. J. P. Ryan, P. Hoffman, A. Nierman and J. Shulte took part in the ceremonies. There were in the sanctuary, Rev. D. Riordan, of Chicago, Rev. M. Flavin, of Des Moines, Rev. T. Mackin, of Illinois, and many other clergymen who had known and revered the holy deceased during life.

The sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. McGovern, of Lockport, Illinois, and was an eloquent tribute to

the memory of one of the holiest religious women of our time. Dr. McGovern had been a pupil of Mother Francis in his boyhood. When he decided on entering the ecclesiastical state, before going to Rome, *he* knelt to receive her blessing. When he returned, an anointed priest of God, *she* knelt to receive his.

The interment took place in the convent cemetery, a large number of Sisters of Mercy from Illinois, and different parts of Iowa being present. The words written in memory of another religious, who has long since slept beside "the waters of the Boyne," may be fittingly applied to Mother Francis:

"Laden with harvest spoils, she entered  
     In at the golden gate of rest;  
 Laid her sheaves at the feet of the Master,  
     And took her station among the blest!"

## CHAPTER XVII.

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CONVENT CHARACTERISTICS. OFFICE FOR THE DEAD.  
HEMORRHAGES. PENANCE. FAITH. SELF-CONTROL.  
PRAYER. CHARITY. A CUP OF TEA. AN ANGRY  
CARPENTER. ST. MONICA'S PLAN. IMPATIENCE.

FROM the day on which her religious life began, to the day of her passage to eternity, Mother Francis was a model of regular observance of rule. In her declining years, as in the years of her first fervor, she never absented herself from community exercises when it was possible to be present. The first in the chapel for morning meditation, she was generally the last to leave it after night prayers.

There was an exception, however, recitation of the Office for the Dead, in choir, which, for a time, had so depressing an effect on her, that she was permitted to recite it privately. This feeling passed away with time. Death—dissolution—the soul leaving the body, pulseless, rigid, cold, was a subject on which she did not love to dwell. Her bright, warm spirit shrank from the silent inaction of the grave; yet the grave was constantly opening to receive those she held dearest on earth.

In mercy and love, God appointed her a brief agony. This peculiarity was natural in a person of her unusual activity of mind, and ardent temperament. As years rolled by, and trials of every kind pressed upon her, the horror of death became less acute. Her own death was as peaceful as a child's.

She had frequent hemorrhages, resulting from attacks of erysipelas. At these times she would kneel on the floor, holding her head over a basin until it was nearly half filled with blood: then, rising weak and exhausted, would say to whoever happened to be near, "Is not God good to let me stay a little while with him in Gethsemani. He was bathed in blood there, you remember."

Sometimes her eyes swelled to bursting, and she became temporarily blind under the severity of attacks also caused by erysipelas. Even then she managed to attend the spiritual duties. A Sister led her to the chapel, which she could not reach without assistance, placed her in her stall, enabling her in this way to join in the prayers of the community. It was a sad but edifying sight, and had a powerful effect in keeping up the fervor of younger members. "What Rev. Mother does, we can do," they said.

Her shoes, generally the worst in the house, were often filled with sand or pebbles, that her sound foot, as well as the maimed one, might share in her daily penances. She crucified her flesh unrelentingly. Indeed, if the Sisters had not made it a point to

watch how she was clothed, and at night, while she slept, replace her worn-out, patched-up garments by better ones, she would have suffered from insufficient clothing. In the matter of food she was equally forgetful of herself. Many a time, at the close of a long and busy day, she had to be reminded that she had not eaten since morning.

“If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could remove mountains.” Resting on this Divine utterance, Mother Francis’ faith was strong as “the everlasting hills.” Obstacles and opposition were no barriers to her spirit of progress. “God helps those who help themselves,” she would say when difficulties assailed her. “He never failed to help me, and I know He will not fail to help me now.”

Nor did He ever fail her. Very often she found “the stone rolled from the door of the monument,” when least expecting it. Faith made her superior to the vicissitudes of life. She could be tried or opposed, but not left anchorless. “Believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things,” her soul was capable of doing much for God.

Naturally quick-tempered, impetuous and impulsive, she strove, by constant watchfulness over self, to correct these imperfections—to become like her gentle patron, St. Francis de Sales, calm in action, considerate for others, meek and humble. It cost many a struggle, but by the power of grace she triumphed over nature, and in her life exemplified the

fulfilment of the Divine precept, "Learn of me, Who am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find peace in your souls."

In recompense, God made her life a continuous prayer, during which her heart and lips ever communed with Him. Before the Tabernacle she knelt, motionless as a statue—enwrapped, as though no longer an inhabitant of this world. "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you," was an invitation she heeded well; and the burdens laid upon her, that increased with years, were placed at her Master's feet, for His disposal. In prayer she received strength of soul, learned to bear and forbear with others, and with herself. When suffering any mental strain she laid her sorrow at the foot of the altar, and came away happy and resigned.

Mother Francis' religious life was modeled on the words of St. Paul: "If I should give all my goods to feed the poor, and deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it would profit me nothing."

Some said she was charitable to a fault. It was remarked, at all events, that to be loved by her it was only necessary to do her an injury. A Sister, who had so far forgotten the amenities as to speak disparagingly when she first became Superior, feared to approach her, but in the routine of duty was obliged not only to approach, but explain. Mother Francis listened silently and then said: "Dear Sister, let the past be forgotten—absolutely. Begin,



from this moment, as if no cloud had come between us, and we will be Sisters, not alone in name, but in heart, as we ought to be."

The Sister, overcome by this manner of condoning her offense, melted into tears, and a true sisterly affection ever after existed between them. Mother Francis' magnetic charity dissipated her little antipathies, as it had done with others in more serious instances. Few could steel themselves against the goodness of her heart.

It not unfrequently happened that other houses of the order in distress applied to her for help, which was always generously given; as it was, to convents of different orders in straitened circumstances. Clergymen, short of funds, in shattered health, both from Illinois and Iowa, occasionally sought admission to the hospital and were invariably received, Mother Francis asking only a memento in their prayers, with masses for herself and the community. Abundant, unexpected benedictions followed these admissions.

"Don't let that old woman fool you so, Mother Francis," said a Sister one day, noticing an unsteady-looking applicant for help in the Intelligence Office, where Mother Francis was listening to her tale of woe. "Although she says she has not tasted a cup of tea for a week, she was locked up in the bridewell, last time I made the visitation there, for inebriety. She had money to spend that way."

“Poor old soul! she needs a cup of tea if she has been in the bridewell. Please get it for her yourself, Sister,” answered Rev. Mother. “If mistakes are made, and they are unavoidable in this world, they had better be made on the side of charity.”

An employee at St. Agatha's Academy, when it was first established, was a sort of necessary evil around the place. He did his work, and he did it well. As an offset, however, his temper was intolerable. At times no one but Mother Francis could approach him, and as he knew a substitute could not easily be gotten, he was insolent even to her. A strawman lying in this's way made him furious; in consequence of which unfortunate fact Mother Francis charitably retained him, and managed as best she could. He understood this well enough, and repaid her with ingratitude.

There is a story told of a lady in the early ages of Christianity, who entreated a holy Bishop to procure her a servant who had a bad temper, that she might acquire the virtue of patience which she did not then possess. The Bishop easily procured such a one, and sent her to the lady, for which, after some hard experiences, she thanked him.

“I am learning the secret of patience, at last. Bishop, thanks to your kindness in accommodating me with the worst-tempered woman I ever met. She abuses me from morning till night; says I starve and ill-treat her; could not do an act of charity if I tried,

and that, in one word, I am a monster of cruelty. I will keep her, nevertheless, as long as she lives. At the time of her death—which is not likely to occur soon—I think I shall be patient enough.”

The Bishop smiled and said: “I hope so. But, my dear madam, few, besides yourself, would care to acquire patience at such a price. If you can keep that woman, whose maliciousness I have heard of for years, you will be a saint and will have my blessing.” Mother Francis’ cross man was the counterpart of this lady’s cross woman, holding his position, perhaps, for similar reasons, until the following incident occurred:

A carpenter, hanging outside-blinds on the second story windows of the academy, being hurriedly called elsewhere, dropped his chisel at the cross man’s feet, who happened to be passing beneath. A yell of rage caused Mother Francis, who was also on the second floor, to open a window and look down.

“Get out of the way,” she said. “If one of these blinds falls you may be hurt.”

“Get out of the way yourself,” he shouted back. “I will not stir until I lay my hands on whoever threw this chisel at me.” Scarcely were the words spoken, when the half-screwed blind dropped on his head, felling him to the ground. He was silent then, and frightened Mother Francis, who witnessed the accident, was beside him in a moment with her medicine chest. If she waited until a doctor came from the city he would probably have died.

She raised his head gently on her knees; saw he had received a deep scalp wound; sponged away the blood; and applied bands of adhesive plaster. He then opened his angry eyes to say, not, "Thank you," but—"Where is the carpenter? You told him to do that, and you will be sorry for it. I'll have revenge some way." Failing to find the object of his wrath, he left the next day for northern Iowa, where he got into an altercation about a land claim with Indians still lingering in that section, who killed him. Mother Francis wept for his untimely end.

Husbands and wives at variance, often came to her to explain their conjugal infelicities; asking advice or sympathy. With these people she usually acted on the plan of St. Monica. "My dear sir," she would say to the irate husband, "you are the party to blame. Your wife admits that you are kind and good to her. If you did not contradict her so often you would be the happiest people in the world."

"Did she really say, I was kind. That beats everything. Indeed, then, I am kind and good to her. The neighbors know it. They never *hear* me abusing her, any way. She is kind and good to me if we do quarrel once in a while. I won't contradict her again, Mother Francis," which assurance restored peace to the household temporarily, at least.

With aggrieved wives she used the same laudable tactics. "My child, your husband thinks the world of you. He only wants you not to scold him so

often for his failings. You have failings, yourself. Men do not like to be scolded for everything; and you are not an angel."

"I believe he does think the world of me, Mother Francis, and I think the world of him. Sure, he ought to know that by this time. I will scold him no more after this blessed day. Maybe our troubles will be over then, please God," the weeping woman would reply. Sometimes these promises were kept. Sometimes they were not kept. But domestic harmony was often the result of Mother Francis' wisdom in pouring oil on troubled waters.

Even Sisters have moments when things seem to jar. "Dear Mother, I have got the blues," some one would say. "Why does not the Blessed Virgin answer my prayers? I have prayed so long for a particular intention without being heard, that I am discouraged."

"She does hear you, Sister. She was commanded to hear you. 'Woman, behold thy son.' Do you forget?" would be the reassuring answer. "Yes, but the days are so short. There is so much work to be done, and so many better ways of doing it; I become impatient as well as discouraged."

"A Sister of Mercy impatient! Rome was not built in a day. The Messiah did not come into the world for 4,000 years after being promised. The Blessed Virgin was not taken to heaven for twelve years after the Ascension. Time is a shadow, a

dream, compared to eternity. Our Lord spent thirty years of His life, preparing for His ministry of three. Now, speak of impatience. Your prayers will be heard, and answered as God knows best;” and the doubting one believed and hoped with profit to her soul.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

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CONVENT CHARACTERISTICS, CONTINUED. DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. THE LAKE WATER. FAITH IN ST. JOSEPH'S INTERCESSION. PATIENCE. AN OBSTINATE CARRIAGE DRIVER. THE END.

IN 1854, when the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was declared to be an article of faith by the great Pontiff, Pius IX, Mother Francis' joy was unbounded. "There can be no longer doubt of the spotless purity of our Sinless Mother," she exclaimed. To little Bernadotte, in the Grotto of Lourdes, she said, "I am the Immaculate Conception," and now Pius IX proclaims it to the world.

"Few Orders in the Church have as much reason to rejoice at this decision as the Order of Mercy, whose foundations she has so specially favored—whether under the burning sun of the tropics, amid the pleasant breezes of the temperate zone, or braving the fogs and snows of Newfoundland. In prosperity and adversity, in weal and woe, she has been with us. Under her protection we are being perfected in the shadow of the Cross."

Nor did the "Immaculate Conception" of Lourdes forget Mother Francis. Thirty-four years later, in 1888, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, she greeted her in heaven, when God called her to eternal joy, laden with the merits and good works of a well-spent life. The commemoration of her death occurs on the beautiful Feast she loved.

Her devotion to St. Joseph was almost as fervent as her devotion to his holy Spouse. In business transactions she always invoked his aid. When the foundations of the new academy were being dug, in 1863, the architect, in calculating for the cellar, overlooked, or did not think it necessary to take into account, that Lake Michigan was only two streets distant, and that he must not dig too deep.

The cellar was to have been eight feet high. Scarcely was a depth of four feet reached, however, when the water of the Lake came rushing through a fissure. The noise was heard at a considerable distance, and soon the large excavation became a surging body of water, in which the workmen stood covered to their waists. The stupefied architect, not anticipating such an event, hurriedly ordered to be filled in, what he had previously ordered to be dug out; yet the water continued to rise. Adjacent property owners came to demand protection for their homes. The architect strove to allay their fears without allaying his own.

Although a few such accidents had, from time to



time, occurred near the Lake Shore, a danger-line overflow was prevented by not digging foundations for buildings deep, and houses erected there are as safe as anywhere else in the city. It was Mother Francis' second experience, which naturally alarmed her.

Noting what was passing, in mute dismay, she rang the community bell to assemble the Sisters in the chapel to pray to St. Joseph for help. The exigency being extreme, their prayers were fervent. In an hour the flood went down. Mother Francis would have prayed all night to St. Joseph to save the convent, but that the crest-fallen architect asked to see her. It was his first building contract, and the accident annoyed him. "Madam," he began, "I acknowledge the cellar is spoiled through my miscalculation. It cannot now be more than one-half the height required by the specifications. I had no idea the water of the Lake extended to Wabash Avenue. However, I have succeeded in stopping the flow, which I cannot easily explain, as it stopped as suddenly as it came."

"*You* succeeded in stopping it. Not at all, sir," replied Mother Francis. "St. Joseph stopped it; otherwise the avenue might have been submerged. It stopped when our hour of prayer was ended." Hearing for the first time of St. Joseph and his interference in such matters, the infidel architect, looking mystified, returned to the spoiled cellar. The "hour

of prayer" mystified him as much as Saint Joseph. It was customary with Mother Francis to place a billet on St. Joseph's altar, in which were written her wants and her desires; after which, very often, her wants were supplied and her desires were granted.

Only those who knew her best, could testify to her meek patience. "There is a point at which patience ceased to be a virtue," is an adage in the world. But Mother Francis knew no such boundary line, as she practiced this difficult virtue to the extremest limits of forbearance. Ingratitude from those upon whom she had lavished favors, did not disturb it. Unkind words spoken in her presence did not provoke unkind words in return. The petulance of young candidates, not yet moulded, "according to the pattern on the Mount," did not draw from her the least harshness of expression. She taught them patience by exemplifying it in their mutual daily intercourse, and her teaching seldom failed of having the desired effect.

On many occasions, sometimes trying ones, she was obliged to listen to language that reflected on herself. On no occasion did she add fuel to the fire, by speaking words she might afterwards regret. Silence was her only defense, so that those who censured were confounded and ashamed. Whatever fires burned within, she let none appear without. Patience, the sister of meekness, was practiced by her to an heroic degree, although she was naturally choleric and impatient.

The holy Foundress of the Order of Mercy, strongly inculcated the practice of patience, as well as of politeness, in the Sisters' social intercourse among themselves, as well as in their intercourse with others; and few of her daughters took the lesson more perfectly to heart, than patient, meek Mother Francis. 'The one who submits is the one who conquers,' was a frequent saying of hers, and as far as she was concerned, a true one.

Once, a clergyman from Galena, lately appointed to the pastorate, in an outburst of zeal, came to Chicago to ask her to give the convent property owned there, by the Sisters of Mercy, to another congregation, without compensation. Determined to carry his point, if possible, he declared in strong language, that she was the cause of the Sisters' failure in Galena (he did not know she was never in Galena); that she exceeded her authority, as he had been informed, by withdrawing them; that the absence of Sisters placed him in a dilemma; and that the least she could do in reparation, was to deed over the property to the community with whom he was negotiating. Other Sisters had failed in Galena after the Sisters of Mercy left, for whom he had no word of unkindness; at least he did not refer to them.

His heated words were so evidently an error of judgment, that a dead silence followed. Mother Francis turned pale, but not a muscle of her face moved. As an answer had to be given, however, she said quietly, to relieve the embarrassment:

"Thanks, Rev. Father, for your charity in pointing out my defects. Your reproaches are fully deserved. Please pray for me. And further, I decline to say."

"Does she always take abuse as patiently as that?" he asked, looking in amazement at the Sister present.

"Always, Father," replied Sister, "but you surprise me."

Mother Francis, then, on her knees, asked his blessing, received it, and withdrew. Having failed in his mission, the reverend gentleman assured Sister it was the last business of the kind he would ever undertake, and expressing regret for his visit, explained that it was wholly in the interest of others.

After the change in the administration of the Orphan Asylum, two reverend gentlemen, authorized to do so, called upon Mother Francis to say that the change was a necessity; alleging, among other things, the unfitness of the house, the poorness of the food and clothing, the strange fact that a surplus was not found to the credit of the asylum.

She listened for awhile, apparently unmoved, "Gentlemen," she said, at last, "I am grateful that you tell me of my shortcomings. Perhaps, I should have done better. The evil is remedied now—all parties are satisfied. I am, at least, by the deep humiliation; and God knows what is best for us all."

This meek answer made the reverend visitors feel anything but comfortable. They assured her, if the thing had to be done over again, they would not be

parties to it. One of them, when afterward raised to the episcopal throne, did not forget the patience she displayed on that trying occasion; nor the pain she endured in the asylum business; and endeavored to atone for it by extreme kindness. This gentleman was Rt. Rev. Bishop McMullen, whose experiences in Chicago, in divers ways, led him to readily sympathize with others.

Once, going out to the farm on a sultry afternoon, in the convent carriage, Mother Francis expressly charged the driver to keep out of the rush of vehicles on State Street, through which crowded thoroughfare they must pass. The man, who prided himself on his horsemanship, listened sullenly, and started off on a mad gallop. The Sister accompanying Rev. Mother, called out to him to stop, as a jam of carriages, buggies, wagons, and other conveyances, was right ahead of him. "I drove better horses than these," he exclaimed excitedly. "Let me alone. We'll come out all right."

But he did not. A frightened team ran full against them, with a force that smashed both vehicles, and seriously injured the horses. The Sisters were unceremoniously thrown into the middle of the street; the man vainly struggled to raise the fallen horses.

With a quickness of action peculiar to her, Mother Francis regained her feet, and returned to the convent, which was only a few blocks distant, without once looking back either at the man or the wreck.

Sister followed, limping from the effects of the fall, that did not seem to much inconvenience Mother Francis, who led a charmed life, as far as accidents were concerned.

"I suppose you think it cruel to leave that fellow in such a dilemma without speaking to him," she remarked to Sister, when they entered the convent. "If I spoke as I feel, I could not control my temper, and sin would most likely be committed. 'Be angry, and sin not,' is a precept reduced to practice, only by some such experiment as this." "I cannot help being amused at the way you walked out of the difficulty," Sister replied, "and I do think you treated him strangely."

Mother Francis was surprised at the nonchalance of her own act, and the obstinate driver came to ask pardon, expecting to be overwhelmed with reproaches.

"I never felt so sorry for anything in my life, Mother Francis," he said. "If you had spoken a cross word to me when you were pitched out of the carriage, I would have jumped into the Lake. You won't have to pay for the damages, anyway. I am a poor man, but as I did the mischief; I will pay for it. And, please God, I will take your advice next time."

"Very well," she said gently, "I see you are sorry, but remember that Sister and I might have been killed. We know you are poor, therefore, the damages needn't trouble you. Only be more careful and less obstinate in future."

"I declare, Mother Francis' patience made me ashamed of myself," he said humbly enough afterward. "It's a good lesson for me, and I needed it."

Many marveled at her forbearance. Few knew the struggles it cost her. Constantly exposed to the observation of others, and to the fire of the sharpest criticism, her opportunities for practicing, this, her favorite virtue, were of daily, nay, of hourly occurrence, which she always turned to her spiritual profit. They are best known by those who witnessed them. Better still, they are known to Him who said, "In your patience you shall possess your souls."

Exteriorly, Mother Francis controlled the least semblance of impatience; interiorly, she gained the victory over self by practicing the contrary virtue. Indeed, few servants of God ever strove more earnestly to obey the divine injunction: "Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," than she did, as an humble, mortified Sister of Mercy.

If night-watching had to be done by the bedside of a dying Sister, she was there to save others the fatigue. If too much labor seemed to be imposed on any one, she helped unseen. If accident of any kind occurred during the night, she remained up for the night repairing it. If a postulant showed signs of discouragement, as sometimes happened, she told her of Mother McAuley's postulancy, inducing her to follow that exemplar. If a teaching Sister was directed to go on the visitation of the sick after



school hours, she begged to be permitted to take her place. When she was Superior, and did not need to ask permission, she often performed this duty though physically unable for it, to spare the Sisters.

When an incorrigible pupil was brought to her by a Sister whose methods of persuasion had failed; she took the offender aside, and appealed to her better feelings with such persuasiveness that the obstinate one yielded, and was sent back to the school-room, repentant, submissive, studiously inclined. She possessed the gift of working on the good side of human nature, pretending to ignore the bad; which, with some characters, is a powerful incentive to the practice of virtue.

Her heart was so expansive, that it responded to the spiritual or temporal wants of all who came within her reach. She could govern a city, or adjust a child's grievances. Yet she did not forget, that the first care of a religious, is the care of her own soul. All through a long eventful career, filled with a thousand mundane cares, often vexatious ones, she made unceasing efforts to curb her natural inclinations; to be united with her Divine Spouse, in thought, word and action, at all times, in all places, amid all labors; until, at last, she rested calmly, long before her happy death, on the peaceful heights of sanctity to which her soul had risen.

Bodily pain, of which she had her full share, was, as she often declared, her merciful nailing to the



cross she sought for when first contemplating entrance on religious life. St. Andrew's passionate soul-cry: "Beloved cross! long expected, ardently desired, receive me into thy arms, bring me to my God!" was often re-echoed in Mother Francis' heart, as it was in the hearts of millions of others who have appeared upon the scene of life, during the centuries that have come and gone since the Crucifixion Eclipse.

Although she has passed away from earth, her memory lives in many hearts. Some one wrote of Archbishop Hughes, after his decease: "They are the living, and they alone, we vainly call the dead." The good die not. She has joined "the community in heaven," among whom is numbered the holy Irish philanthropist, Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Order of Mercy, who expended a princely fortune inherited from her foster-parents, converted by her to Catholicity, in restoring monasticism in the British Islands, after ages of suppression and persecution. Mother Mary Francis de Sales Monholland was one of her most worthy daughters.

THE END.









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